THE WEEK-END LIBRARY

ISSUE OF 1930

NEW

LEGEND

Follow your NOSE to

Pleasure Island

or

Be your own Beagle

in

THE WEEK-END PRESERVE

NOTE: If you lose the scent or catch a cold, follow the numbers instead

MONTCLAIR

1. If life at times seems too binding let Somerset Maugham show you the value OF HUMAN BONDAGE

8 For a bizarre ½ hour Stephen Benét takes you to Carnegie Hall to see a symphony leader who conducts with his tail & becomes THE KING OF THE CATS

19 Aldous Huxley is on this train as Jesting Pilate returning from an inspection of AMERICA

NEW JERSEY

18 This way to the Santa Fé Trail & Billy the Kid's THREE DAY'S BATTLE by Walter Noble Burns

Francis Noyes Hart comes from way down South. You'll go up in the air with CONTACT, her story of love & war

9

RUMSON

Polo here

6 Uncle Daniel Drew's own story of HOW TO WORK UP A PANIC! He and Jay Gould & Jubilee Jim Fiske played bears in bulls' clothing

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THE WEEK-END LIBRARY

A NOTE UPON COMPOSITION

THE WEEK-END LIBRARY *is composed of carefully selected books and fragments of books. You will therefore notice that its typography is varied and that its pages are not numbered consecutively from beginning to end. The selections for this volume range over nineteen different books, producing these inconsistencies of type and pagination. For this reason it is possible to offer you fifteen hundred pages from the outstanding writers of our time for the price of an ordinary novel. Endsheet maps have been drawn for your convenience to supplement the table of contents and to point out for you the order in which the selections appear.*

THE WEEK-END LIBRARY

ISSUE OF 1930

DOUBLEDAY, DORAN & COMPANY, INC.
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1930

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FIRST EDITION

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

For convenience and after the manner of its successful predecessors this book is called THE WEEK-END LIBRARY. It would be more accurate to call it THE HOUSEPARTY for in it you are invited to meet many of the most distinguished literary figures of the day. In the order of their appearance they are:

W. SOMERSET MAUGHAM
CHRISTOPHER MORLEY
JOSEPH CONRAD
H. G. WELLS
HELEN KELLER
BOUCK WHITE
EDNA FERBER
STEPHEN VINCENT BENÉT
FRANCES NOYES HART
ARNOLD BENNETT
T. S. STRIBLING
EDGAR WALLACE
DONALD OGDEN STEWART
DON MARQUIS
IRVIN S. COBB
WALT WHITMAN
T. E. LAWRENCE
WALTER NOBLE BURNS
ALDOUS HUXLEY

We are proud of the privilege of being hosts for such a gathering of celebrities. We are delighted to have you as a guest. We feel quite certain that the acquaintances here formed will rapidly develop into friendships and that you will eagerly seek a more complete and intimate association with the brilliant minds which you have met in these pages.

Your bookseller will direct you to other books by these authors, and give you fuller information concerning any or all of these writers who have particularly attracted you.

At intervals of not less than one year we will be giving similar parties to which you will be invited.

DOUBLEDAY, DORAN AND COMPANY, INC.

May 1, 1930

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OF HUMAN BONDAGE

A NOVEL BY

W. Somerset Maugham

THIS book has been acclaimed the most brilliant of the autobiographical novels which the present century has produced. It is widely accepted as a classic.

I

THE day broke gray and dull. The clouds hung heavily, and there was a rawness in the air that suggested snow. A woman servant came into a room in which a child was sleeping and drew the curtains. She glanced mechanically at the house opposite, a stucco house with a portico, and went to the child's bed.

"Wake up, Philip," she said.

She pulled down the bed-clothes, took him in her arms, and carried him downstairs. He was only half awake.

"Your mother wants you," she said.

She opened the door of a room on the floor below and took the child over to a bed in which a woman was lying. It was his mother. She stretched out her arms, and the child nestled by her side. He did not ask why he had been awakened. The woman kissed his eyes, and with thin, small hands felt the warm body through his white flannel nightgown. She pressed him closer to herself.

"Are you sleepy, darling?" she said.

Her voice was so weak that it seemed to come already from a great distance. The child did not answer, but smiled comfortably. He was very happy in the large, warm bed, with those soft arms about him. He tried to make himself smaller still as he cuddled up against his mother, and he kissed her sleepily. In a moment he closed his eyes and was fast asleep. The doctor came forwards and stood by the bed-side.

"Oh, don't take him away yet," she moaned.

The doctor, without answering, looked at her gravely. Knowing she would not be allowed to keep the child much longer, the woman kissed him again; and she passed her hand down his body till she came to his feet; she held the right foot in her hand and felt the five small toes; and then slowly passed her hand over the left one. She gave a sob.

"What's the matter?" said the doctor. "You're tired."

She shook her head, unable to speak, and the tears rolled down her cheeks. The doctor bent down.

"Let me take him."

She was too weak to resist his wish, and she gave the child up. The doctor handed him back to his nurse.

"You'd better put him back in his own bed."

"Very well, sir."

The little boy, still sleeping, was taken away. His mother sobbed now broken-heartedly.

"What will happen to him, poor child?"

The monthly nurse tried to quiet her, and presently, from exhaustion, the crying ceased. The doctor walked to a table on the other side of the room, upon which, under a towel, lay the body of a still-born child. He lifted the towel and looked. He was hidden from the bed by a screen, but the woman guessed what he was doing.

"Was it a girl or a boy?" she whispered to the nurse.

"Another boy."

The woman did not answer. In a moment the child's nurse came back. She approached the bed.

"Master Philip never woke up," she said.

There was a pause. Then the doctor felt his patient's pulse once more.

"I don't think there's anything I can do just now," he said. "I'll call again after breakfast."

"I'll show you out, sir," said the child's nurse.

They walked downstairs in silence. In the hall the doctor stopped.

"You've sent for Mrs. Carey's brother-in-law, haven't you?"

"Yes, sir."

"D'you know at what time he'll be here?"

"No, sir, I'm expecting a telegram."

"What about the little boy? I should think he'd be better out of the way."

"Miss Watkin said she'd take him, sir."

"Who's she?"

"She's his godmother, sir. D'you think Mrs. Carey will get over it, sir?"

The doctor shook his head.

II

It was a week later. Philip was sitting on the floor in the drawing-room at Miss Watkin's house in Onslow Gardens. He was an only child and used to amusing himself. The room was filled with massive furniture, and on each of the sofas were three big cushions. There was a cushion too in each arm-chair. All these he had taken and, with the help of the gilt rout chairs, light and easy to move, had made an elaborate cave in which he could hide himself from the Red Indians who were lurking behind the curtains. He put his ear to the floor and listened to the herd of buffaloes that raced across the prairie. Presently, hearing the door open, he held his breath so that he might not be discovered; but a violent hand pulled away a chair and the cushions fell down.

"You naughty boy, Miss Watkin *will* be cross with you."

"Hulloa, Emma!" he said.

The nurse bent down and kissed him, then began to shake out the cushions, and put them back in their places.

"Am I to come home?" he asked.

"Yes, I've come to fetch you."

"You've got a new dress on."

It was in eighteen-eighty-five, and she wore a bustle. Her gown was of black velvet, with tight sleeves and sloping shoulders, and the skirt had three large flounces. She wore a black bonnet with velvet strings. She hesitated. The question she had expected did not come, and so she could not give the answer she had prepared.

"Aren't you going to ask how your mamma is?" she said at length.

"Oh, I forgot. How is mamma?"

Now she was ready.

"Your mamma is quite well and happy."

"Oh, I am glad."

"Your mamma's gone away. You won't ever see her any more."

Philip did not know what she meant.

"Why not?"

"Your mamma's in heaven."

She began to cry, and Philip, though he did not quite under-

stand, cried too. Emma was a tall, big-boned woman, with fair hair and large features. She came from Devonshire and, notwithstanding her many years of service in London, had never lost the breadth of her accent. Her tears increased her emotion, and she pressed the little boy to her heart. She felt vaguely the pity of that child deprived of the only love in the world that is quite unselfish. It seemed dreadful that he must be handed over to strangers. But in a little while she pulled herself together.

"Your Uncle William is waiting in to see you," she said. "Go and say good-bye to Miss Watkin, and we'll go home."

"I don't want to say good-bye," he answered, instinctively anxious to hide his tears.

"Very well, run upstairs and get your hat."

He fetched it, and when he came down Emma was waiting for him in the hall. He heard the sound of voices in the study behind the dining-room. He paused. He knew that Miss Watkin and her sister were talking to friends, and it seemed to him—he was nine years old—that if he went in they would be sorry for him.

"I think I'll go and say good-bye to Miss Watkin."

"I think you'd better," said Emma.

"Go in and tell them I'm coming," he said.

He wished to make the most of his opportunity. Emma knocked at the door and walked in. He heard her speak.

"Master Philip wants to say good-bye to you, miss."

There was a sudden hush of the conversation, and Philip limped in. Henrietta Watkin was a stout woman, with a red face and dyed hair. In those days to dye the hair excited comment, and Philip had heard much gossip at home when his godmother's changed colour. She lived with an elder sister, who had resigned herself contentedly to old age. Two ladies, whom Philip did not know, were calling, and they looked at him curiously.

"My poor child," said Miss Watkin, opening her arms.

She began to cry. Philip understood now why she had not been in to luncheon and why she wore a black dress. She could not speak.

"I've got to go home," said Philip, at last.

He disengaged himself from Miss Watkin's arms, and she kissed him again. Then he went to her sister and bade her good-bye too. One of the strange ladies asked if she might kiss him, and he gravely gave her permission. Though crying, he keenly enjoyed the sensation he was causing; he would have been glad to stay a little longer to be made much of, but felt they expected him to go, so he said that Emma was waiting for him. He went out

of the room. Emma had gone downstairs to speak with a friend in the basement, and he waited for her on the landing. He heard Henrietta Watkin's voice.

"His mother was my greatest friend. I can't bear to think that she's dead."

"You oughtn't to have gone to the funeral, Henrietta," said her sister. "I knew it would upset you."

Then one of the strangers spoke.

"Poor little boy, it's dreadful to think of him quite alone in the world. I see he limps."

"Yes, he's got a club-foot. It was such a grief to his mother."

Then Emma came back. They called a hansom, and she told the driver where to go.

III

When they reached the house Mrs. Carey had died in—it was in a dreary, respectable street between Notting Hill Gate and High Street, Kensington—Emma led Philip into the drawing-room. His uncle was writing letters of thanks for the wreaths which had been sent. One of them, which had arrived too late for the funeral, lay in its cardboard box on the hall-table.

"Here's Master Philip," said Emma.

Mr. Carey stood up slowly and shook hands with the little boy. Then on second thoughts he bent down and kissed his forehead. He was a man of somewhat less than average height, inclined to corpulence, with his hair, worn long, arranged over the scalp so as to conceal his baldness. He was clean-shaven. His features were regular, and it was possible to imagine that in his youth he had been good-looking. On his watch-chain he wore a gold cross.

"You're going to live with me now, Philip," said Mr. Carey. "Shall you like that?"

Two years before Philip had been sent down to stay at the vicarage after an attack of chicken-pox; but there remained with him a recollection of an attic and a large garden rather than of his uncle and aunt.

"Yes."

"You must look upon me and your Aunt Louisa as your father and mother."

The child's mouth trembled a little, he reddened, but did not answer.

"Your dear mother left you in my charge."

Mr. Carey had no great ease in expressing himself. When the news came that his sister-in-law was dying, he set off at once for London, but on the way thought of nothing but the disturbance in his life that would be caused if her death forced him to undertake the care of her son. He was well over fifty, and his wife, to whom he had been married for thirty years, was childless; he did not look forward with any pleasure to the presence of a small boy who might be noisy and rough. He had never much liked his sister-in-law.

"I'm going to take you down to Blackstable tomorrow," he said.

"With Emma?"

The child put his hand in hers, and she pressed it.

"I'm afraid Emma must go away," said Mr. Carey.

"But I want Emma to come with me."

Philip began to cry, and the nurse could not help crying too. Mr. Carey looked at them helplessly.

"I think you'd better leave me alone with Master Philip for a moment."

"Very good, sir."

Though Philip clung to her, she released herself gently. Mr. Carey took the boy on his knee and put his arm round him.

"You mustn't cry," he said. "You're too old to have a nurse now. We must see about sending you to school."

"I want Emma to come with me," the child repeated.

"It costs too much money, Philip. Your father didn't leave very much, and I don't know what's become of it. You must look at every penny you spend."

Mr. Carey had called the day before on the family solicitor. Philip's father was a surgeon in good practice, and his hospital appointments suggested an established position; so that it was a surprise on his sudden death from blood-poisoning to find that he had left his widow little more than his life insurance and what could be got for the lease of their house in Bruton Street. This was six months ago; and Mrs. Carey, already in delicate health, finding herself with child, had lost her head and accepted for the lease the first offer that was made. She stored her furniture, and, at a rent which the parson thought outrageous, took a furnished house for a year, so that she might suffer from no inconvenience till her child was born. But she had never been used to the management of money, and was unable to adapt her expenditure to her altered circumstances. The little she had slipped through her fingers in one way and another, so that now, when all expenses were paid, not much more than two thousand pounds remained to support the boy till he was able to earn his own living. It was impossible to explain all this to Philip and he was sobbing still.

"You'd better go to Emma," Mr. Carey said, feeling that she could console the child better than anyone.

Without a word Philip slipped off his uncle's knee, but Mr. Carey stopped him.

"We must go tomorrow, because on Saturday I've got to prepare my sermon, and you must tell Emma to get your things ready today. You can bring all your toys. And if you want anything

to remember your father and mother by you can take one thing for each of them. Everything else is going to be sold."

The boy slipped out of the room. Mr. Carey was unused to work, and he turned to his correspondence with resentment. On one side of the desk was a bundle of bills, and these filled him with irritation. One especially seemed preposterous. Immediately after Mrs. Carey's death Emma had ordered from the florist masses of white flowers for the room in which the dead woman lay. It was sheer waste of money. Emma took far too much upon herself. Even if there had been no financial necessity, he would have dismissed her.

But Philip went to her, and hid his face in her bosom, and wept as though his heart would break. And she, feeling that he was almost her own son—she had taken him when he was a month old—consoled him with soft words. She promised that she would come and see him sometimes, and that she would never forget him; and she told him about the country he was going to and about her own home in Devonshire—her father kept a turnpike on the high-road that led to Exeter, and there were pigs in the sty, and there was a cow, and the cow had just had a calf—till Philip forgot his tears and grew excited at the thought of his approaching journey. Presently she put him down, for there was much to be done, and he helped her to lay out his clothes on the bed. She sent him into the nursery to gather up his toys, and in a little while he was playing happily.

But at last he grew tired of being alone and went back to the bed-room, in which Emma was now putting his things into a big tin box; he remembered then that his uncle had said he might take something to remember his father and mother by. He told Emma and asked her what he should take.

"You'd better go into the drawing-room and see what you fancy."

"Uncle William's there."

"Never mind that. They're your own things now."

Philip went downstairs slowly and found the door open. Mr. Carey had left the room. Philip walked slowly round. They had been in the house so short a time that there was little in it that had a particular interest to him. It was a stranger's room, and Philip saw nothing that struck his fancy. But he knew which were his mother's things and which belonged to the landlord, and presently fixed on a little clock that he had once heard his mother say she liked. With this he walked again rather disconsolately upstairs. Outside the door of his mother's bed-room he stopped and

listened. Though no one had told him not to go in, he had a feeling that it would be wrong to do so; he was a little frightened, and his heart beat uncomfortably; but at the same time something impelled him to turn the handle. He turned it very gently, as if to prevent anyone within from hearing, and then slowly pushed the door open. He stood on the threshold for a moment before he had the courage to enter. He was not frightened now, but it seemed strange. He closed the door behind him. The blinds were drawn, and the room, in the cold light of a January afternoon, was dark. On the dressing-table were Mrs. Carey's brushes and the hand mirror. In a little tray were hairpins. There was a photograph of himself on the chimney-piece and one of his father. He had often been in the room when his mother was not in it, but now it seemed different. There was something curious in the look of the chairs. The bed was made as though someone were going to sleep in it that night, and in a case on the pillow was a night-dress.

Philip opened a large cupboard filled with dresses and, stepping in, took as many of them as he could in his arms and buried his face in them. They smelt of the scent his mother used. Then he pulled open the drawers, filled with his mother's things, and looked at them: there were lavender bags among the linen, and their scent was fresh and pleasant. The strangeness of the room left it, and it seemed to him that his mother had just gone out for a walk. She would be in presently and would come upstairs to have nursery tea with him. And he seemed to feel her kiss on his lips.

It was not true that he would never see her again. It was not true simply because it was impossible. He climbed up on the bed and put his head on the pillow. He lay there quite still.

IV

Philip parted from Emma with tears, but the journey to Blackstable amused him, and, when they arrived, he was resigned and cheerful. Blackstable was sixty miles from London. Giving their luggage to a porter, Mr. Carey set out to walk with Philip to the vicarage; it took them little more than five minutes, and, when they reached it, Philip suddenly remembered the gate. It was red and five-barred: it swung both ways on easy hinges; and it was possible, though forbidden, to swing backwards and forwards on it. They walked through the garden to the front-door. This was only used by visitors and on Sundays, and on special occasions, as when the Vicar went up to London or came back. The traffic of the house took place through a side-door, and there was a back door as well for the gardener and for beggars and tramps. It was a fairly large house of yellow brick, with a red roof, built about five and twenty years before in an ecclesiastical style. The front-door was like a church porch, and the drawing-room windows were gothic.

Mrs. Carey, knowing by what train they were coming, waited in the drawing-room and listened for the click of the gate. When she heard it she went to the door.

"There's Aunt Louisa," said Mr. Carey, when he saw her. "Run and give her a kiss."

Philip started to run, awkwardly, trailing his club-foot, and then stopped. Mrs. Carey was a little, shrivelled woman of the same age as her husband, with a face extraordinarily filled with deep wrinkles, and pale blue eyes. Her gray hair was arranged in ringlets according to the fashion of her youth. She wore a black dress, and her only ornament was a gold chain, from which hung a cross. She had a shy manner and a gentle voice.

"Did you walk, William?" she said, almost reproachfully, as she kissed her husband.

"I didn't think of it," he answered, with a glance at his nephew.

"It didn't hurt you to walk, Philip, did it?" she asked the child.

"No. I always walk."

He was a little surprised at their conversation. Aunt Louisa told him to come in, and they entered the hall. It was paved with red and yellow tiles, on which alternately were a Greek Cross

and the Lamb of God. An imposing staircase led out of the hall. It was of polished pine, with a peculiar smell, and had been put in because fortunately, when the church was reseated, enough wood remained over. The balusters were decorated with emblems of the Four Evangelists.

"I've had the stove lighted as I thought you'd be cold after your journey," said Mrs. Carey.

It was a large black stove that stood in the hall and was only lighted if the weather was very bad and the Vicar had a cold. It was not lighted if Mrs. Carey had a cold. Coal was expensive. Besides, Mary Ann, the maid, didn't like fires all over the place. If they wanted all them fires they must keep a second girl. In the winter Mr. and Mrs. Carey lived in the dining-room so that one fire should do, and in the summer they could not get out of the habit, so the drawing-room was used only by Mr. Carey on Sunday afternoons for his nap. But every Saturday he had a fire in the study so that he could write his sermon.

Aunt Louisa took Philip upstairs and showed him into a tiny bed-room that looked out on the drive. Immediately in front of the window was a large tree, which Philip remembered now because the branches were so low that it was possible to climb quite high up it.

"A small room for a small boy," said Mrs. Carey. "You won't be frightened at sleeping alone?"

"Oh, no."

On his first visit to the vicarage he had come with his nurse, and Mrs. Carey had had little to do with him. She looked at him now with some uncertainty.

"Can you wash your own hands, or shall I wash them for you?"

"I can wash myself," he answered firmly.

"Well, I shall look at them when you come down to tea," said Mrs. Carey.

She knew nothing about children. After it was settled that Philip should come down to Blackstable, Mrs. Carey had thought much how she should treat him; she was anxious to do her duty; but now he was there she found herself just as shy of him as he was of her. She hoped he would not be noisy and rough, because her husband did not like rough and noisy boys. Mrs. Carey made an excuse to leave Philip alone, but in a moment came back and knocked at the door; she asked him, without coming in, if he could pour out the water himself. Then she went downstairs and rang the bell for tea.

The dining-room, large and well-proportioned, had windows on

two sides of it, with heavy curtains of red rep; there was a big table in the middle; and at one end an imposing mahogany sideboard with a looking-glass in it. In one corner stood a harmonium. On each side of the fireplace were chairs covered in stamped leather, each with an antimacassar; one had arms and was called the husband, and the other had none and was called the wife. Mrs. Carey never sat in the arm-chair: she said she preferred a chair that was not too comfortable; there was always a lot to do, and if her chair had had arms she might not be so ready to leave it.

Mr. Carey was making up the fire when Philip came in, and he pointed out to his nephew that there were two pokers. One was large and bright and polished and unused, and was called the Vicar; and the other, which was much smaller and had evidently passed through many fires, was called the Curate.

"What are we waiting for?" said Mr. Carey.

"I told Mary Ann to make you an egg. I thought you'd be hungry after your journey."

Mrs. Carey thought the journey from London to Blackstable very tiring. She seldom travelled herself, for the living was only three hundred a year, and, when her husband wanted a holiday, since there was not money for two, he went by himself. He was very fond of Church Congresses and usually managed to go up to London once a year; and once he had been to Paris for the exhibition, and two or three times to Switzerland. Mary Ann brought in the egg, and they sat down. The chair was much too low for Philip, and for a moment neither Mr. Carey nor his wife knew what to do.

"I'll put some books under him," said Mary Ann.

She took from the top of the harmonium the large Bible and the prayer-book from which the Vicar was accustomed to read prayers, and put them on Philip's chair.

"Oh, William, he can't sit on the Bible," said Mrs. Carey, in a shocked tone. "Couldn't you get him some books out of the study?"

Mr. Carey considered the question for an instant.

"I don't think it matters this once if you put the prayer-book on the top, Mary Ann," he said. "The book of Common Prayer is the composition of men like ourselves. It has no claim to divine authorship."

"I hadn't thought of that, William," said Aunt Louisa.

Philip perched himself on the books, and the Vicar, having said grace, cut the top off his egg.

"There," he said, handing it to Philip, "you can eat my top if you like."

Philip would have liked an egg to himself, but he was not offered one, so took what he could.

"How have the chickens been laying since I went away?" asked the Vicar.

"Oh, they've been dreadful, only one or two a day."

"How did you like that top, Philip?" asked his uncle.

"Very much, thank you."

"You shall have another one on Sunday afternoon."

Mr. Carey always had a boiled egg at tea on Sunday, so that he might be fortified for the evening service.

V

Philip came gradually to know the people he was to live with, and by fragments of conversation, some of it not meant for his ears, learned a good deal both about himself and about his dead parents. Philip's father had been much younger than the Vicar of Blackstable. After a brilliant career at St. Luke's Hospital he was put on the staff, and presently began to earn money in considerable sums. He spent it freely. When the parson set about restoring his church and asked his brother for a subscription, he was surprised by receiving a couple of hundred pounds: Mr. Carey, thrifty by inclination and economical by necessity, accepted it with mingled feelings; he was envious of his brother because he could afford to give so much, pleased for the sake of his church, and vaguely irritated by a generosity which seemed almost ostentatious. Then Henry Carey married a patient, a beautiful girl but penniless, an orphan with no near relations, but of good family; and there was an array of fine friends at the wedding. The parson, on his visits to her when he came to London, held himself with reserve. He felt shy with her and in his heart he resented her great beauty: she dressed more magnificently than became the wife of a hardworking surgeon; and the charming furniture of her house, the flowers among which she lived even in winter, suggested an extravagance which he deplored. He heard her talk of entertainments she was going to; and, as he told his wife on getting home again, it was impossible to accept hospitality without making some return. He had seen grapes in the dining-room that must have cost at least eight shillings a pound; and at luncheon he had been given asparagus two months before it was ready in the vicarage garden. Now all he had anticipated was come to pass: the Vicar felt the satisfaction of the prophet who saw fire and brimstone consume the city which would not mend its way to his warning. Poor Philip was practically penniless, and what was the good of his mother's fine friends now? He heard that his father's extravagance was really criminal, and it was a mercy that Providence had seen fit to take his dear mother to itself: she had no more idea of money than a child.

When Philip had been a week at Blackstable an incident happened which seemed to irritate his uncle very much. One morning

he found on the breakfast table a small packet which had been sent on by post from the late Mrs. Carey's house in London. It was addressed to her. When the parson opened it he found a dozen photographs of Mrs. Carey. They showed the head and shoulders only, and her hair was more plainly done than usual, low on the forehead, which gave her an unusual look; the face was thin and worn, but no illness could impair the beauty of her features. There was in the large dark eyes a sadness which Philip did not remember. The first sight of the dead woman gave Mr. Carey a little shock, but this was quickly followed by perplexity. The photographs seemed quite recent, and he could not imagine who had ordered them.

"D'you know anything about these, Philip?" he asked.

"I remember mamma said she'd been taken," he answered. "Miss Watkin scolded her. . . . She said: I wanted the boy to have something to remember me by when he grows up."

Mr. Carey looked at Philip for an instant. The child spoke in a clear treble. He recalled the words, but they meant nothing to him.

"You'd better take one of the photographs and keep it in your room," said Mr. Carey. "I'll put the others away."

He sent one to Miss Watkin, and she wrote and explained how they came to be taken.

One day Mrs. Carey was lying in bed, but she was feeling a little better than usual, and the doctor in the morning had seemed hopeful; Emma had taken the child out, and the maids were downstairs in the basement; suddenly Mrs. Carey felt desperately alone in the world. A great fear seized her that she would not recover from the confinement which she was expecting in a fortnight. Her son was nine years old. How could he be expected to remember her? She could not bear to think that he would grow up and forget, forget her utterly; and she had loved him so passionately, because he was weakly and deformed, and because he was her child. She had no photographs of herself taken since her marriage, and that was ten years before. She wanted her son to know what she looked like at the end. He could not forget her then, not forget utterly. She knew that if she called her maid and told her she wanted to get up, the maid would prevent her, and perhaps send for the doctor, and she had not the strength now to struggle or argue. She got out of bed and began to dress herself. She had been on her back so long that her legs gave way beneath her, and then the soles of her feet tingled so that she could hardly bear to put them to the ground. But she

went on. She was unused to doing her own hair and, when she raised her arms and began to brush it, she felt faint. She could never do it as her maid did. It was beautiful hair, very fine, and of a deep rich gold. Her eyebrows were straight and dark. She put on a black skirt, but chose the bodice of the evening dress which she liked best: it was of a white damask which was fashionable in those days. She looked at herself in the glass. Her face was very pale, but her skin was clear: she had never had much colour, and this had always made the redness of her beautiful mouth emphatic. She could not restrain a sob. But she could not afford to be sorry for herself; she was feeling already desperately tired; and she put on the furs which Henry had given her the Christmas before—she had been so proud of them and so happy then—and slipped downstairs with beating heart. She got safely out of the house and drove to a photographer. She paid for a dozen photographs. She was obliged to ask for a glass of water in the middle of the sitting; and the assistant, seeing she was ill, suggested that she should come another day, but she insisted on staying till the end. At last it was finished, and she drove back again to the dingy little house in Kensington which she hated with all her heart. It was a horrible house to die in.

She found the front door open, and when she drove up the maid and Emma ran down the steps to help her. They had been frightened when they found her room empty. At first they thought she must have gone to Miss Watkin, and the cook was sent round. Miss Watkin came back with her and was waiting anxiously in the drawing-room. She came downstairs now full of anxiety and reproaches; but the exertion had been more than Mrs. Carey was fit for, and when the occasion for firmness no longer existed she gave way. She fell heavily into Emma's arms and was carried upstairs. She remained unconscious for a time that seemed incredibly long to those that watched her, and the doctor, hurriedly sent for, did not come. It was next day, when she was a little better, that Miss Watkin got some explanation out of her. Philip was playing on the floor of his mother's bed-room, and neither of the ladies paid attention to him. He only understood vaguely what they were talking about, and he could not have said why those words remained in his memory.

"I wanted the boy to have something to remember me by when he grows up."

"I can't make out why she ordered a dozen," said Mr. Carey. "Two would have done."

VI

One day was very like another at the vicarage.

Soon after breakfast Mary Ann brought in *The Times*. Mr. Carey shared it with two neighbours. He had it from ten till one, when the gardener took it over to Mr. Ellis at the Limes, with whom it remained till seven; then it was taken to Miss Brooks at the Manor House, who, since she got it late, had the advantage of keeping it. In summer Mrs. Carey, when she was making jam, often asked her for a copy to cover the pots with. When the Vicar settled down to his paper his wife put on her bonnet and went out to do the shopping. Philip accompanied her. Blackstable was a fishing village. It consisted of a high street in which were the shops, the bank, the doctor's house, and the houses of two or three coalship owners; round the little harbor were shabby streets in which lived fishermen and poor people; but since they went to chapel they were of no account. When Mrs. Carey passed the dissenting ministers in the street she stepped over to the other side to avoid meeting them, but if there was not time for this fixed her eyes on the pavement. It was a scandal to which the Vicar had never resigned himself that there were three chapels in the High Street: he could not help feeling that the law should have stepped in to prevent their erection. Shopping in Blackstable was not a simple matter; for dissent, helped by the fact that the parish church was two miles from the town, was very common; and it was necessary to deal only with churchgoers; Mrs. Carey knew perfectly that the vicarage custom might make all the difference to a tradesman's faith. There were two butchers who went to church, and they would not understand that the Vicar could not deal with both of them at once; nor were they satisfied with his simple plan of going for six months to one and for six months to the other. The butcher who was not sending meat to the vicarage constantly threatened not to come to church, and the Vicar was sometimes obliged to make a threat: it was very wrong of him not to come to church, but if he carried iniquity further and actually went to chapel, then of course, excellent as his meat was, Mr. Carey would be forced to leave him for ever. Mrs. Carey often stopped at the bank to deliver a message to Josiah Graves, the manager, who was choir-master, treasurer,

and churchwarden. He was a tall, thin man with a sallow face and a long nose; his hair was very white, and to Philip he seemed extremely old. He kept the parish accounts, arranged the treats for the choir and the schools; though there was no organ in the parish church, it was generally considered (in Blackstable) that the choir he led was the best in Kent; and when there was any ceremony, such as a visit from the Bishop for confirmation or from the Rural Dean to preach at the Harvest Thanksgiving, he made the necessary preparations. But he had no hesitation in doing all manner of things without more than a perfunctory consultation with the Vicar, and the Vicar, though always ready to be saved trouble, much resented the churchwarden's managing ways. He really seemed to look upon himself as the most important person in the parish. Mr. Carey constantly told his wife that if Josiah Graves did not take care he would give him a good rap over the knuckles one day; but Mrs. Carey advised him to bear with Josiah Graves: he meant well, and it was not his fault if he was not quite a gentleman. The Vicar, finding his comfort in the practice of a Christian virtue, exercised forbearance; but he revenged himself by calling the churchwarden Bismarck behind his back.

Once there had been a serious quarrel between the pair, and Mrs. Carey still thought of that anxious time with dismay. The Conservative candidate had announced his intention of addressing a meeting at Blackstable; and Josiah Graves, having arranged that it should take place in the Mission Hall, went to Mr. Carey and told him that he hoped he would say a few words. It appeared that the candidate had asked Josiah Graves to take the chair. This was more than Mr. Carey could put up with. He had firm views upon the respect which was due to the cloth, and it was ridiculous for a churchwarden to take the chair at a meeting when the Vicar was there. He reminded Josiah Graves that parson meant person, that is, the vicar was the person of the parish. Josiah Graves answered that he was the first to recognise the dignity of the church, but this was a matter of politics, and in his turn he reminded the Vicar that their Blessed Saviour had enjoined upon them to render unto Cæsar the things that were Cæsar's. To this Mr. Carey replied that the devil could quote scripture to his purpose, himself had sole authority over the Mission Hall, and if he were not asked to be chairman he would refuse the use of it for a political meeting. Josiah Graves told Mr. Carey that he might do as he chose, and for his part he thought the Wesleyan Chapel would be an equally suitable place. Then Mr. Carey said that if

Josiah Graves set foot in what was little better than a heathen temple he was not fit to be churchwarden in a Christian parish. Josiah Graves thereupon resigned all his offices, and that very evening sent to the church for his cassock and surplice. His sister, Miss Graves, who kept house for him, gave up her secretaryship of the Maternity Club, which provided the pregnant poor with flannel, baby linen, coals, and five shillings. Mr. Carey said he was at last master in his own house. But soon he found that he was obliged to see to all sorts of things that he knew nothing about; and Josiah Graves, after the first moment of irritation, discovered that he had lost his chief interest in life. Mrs. Carey and Miss Graves were much distressed by the quarrel; they met after a discreet exchange of letters, and made up their minds to put the matter right: they talked, one to her husband, the other to her brother, from morning till night; and since they were persuading these gentlemen to do what in their hearts they wanted, after three weeks of anxiety a reconciliation was effected. It was to both their interests, but they ascribed it to a common love for their Redeemer. The meeting was held at the Mission Hall, and the doctor was asked to be chairman. Mr. Carey and Josiah Graves both made speeches.

When Mrs. Carey had finished her business with the banker, she generally went upstairs to have a little chat with his sister; and while the ladies talked of parish matters, the curate or the new bonnet of Mrs. Wilson—Mr. Wilson was the richest man in Blackstable, he was thought to have at least five hundred a year, and he had married his cook—Philip sat demurely in the stiff parlour, used only to receive visitors, and busied himself with the restless movements of goldfish in a bowl. The windows were never opened except to air the room for a few minutes in the morning, and it had a stuffy smell which seemed to Philip to have a mysterious connection with banking.

Then Mrs. Carey remembered that she had to go to the grocer, and they continued their way. When the shopping was done they often went down a side street of little houses, mostly of wood, in which fishermen dwelt (and here and there a fisherman sat on his doorstep mending his nets, and nets hung to dry upon the doors), till they came to a small beach, shut in on each side by warehouses, but with a view of the sea. Mrs. Carey stood for a few minutes and looked at it, it was turbid and yellow, [and who knows what thoughts passed through her mind?] while Philip searched for flat stones to play ducks and drakes. Then they walked slowly back. They looked into the post office to get the right time,

nodded to Mrs. Wigram the doctor's wife, who sat at her window sewing, and so got home.

Dinner was at one o'clock; and on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday it consisted of beef, roast, hashed, and minced, and on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday of mutton. On Sunday they ate one of their own chickens. In the afternoon Philip did his lessons. He was taught Latin and mathematics by his uncle who knew neither, and French and the piano by his aunt. Of French she was ignorant, but she knew the piano well enough to accompany the old-fashioned songs she had sung for thirty years. Uncle William used to tell Philip that when he was a curate his wife had known twelve songs by heart, which she could sing at a moment's notice whenever she was asked. She often sang still when there was a tea-party at the vicarage. There were few people whom the Careys cared to ask there, and their parties consisted always of the curate, Josiah Graves with his sister, Dr. Wigram and his wife. After tea Miss Graves played one or two of Mendelssohn's *Songs without Words,* and Mrs. Carey sang *When the Swallows Homeward Fly,* or *Trot, Trot, My Pony.*

But the Careys did not give tea-parties often; the preparations upset them, and when their guests were gone they felt themselves exhausted. They preferred to have tea by themselves, and after tea they played backgammon. Mrs. Carey arranged that her husband should win, because he did not like losing. They had cold supper at eight. It was a scrappy meal because Mary Ann resented getting anything ready after tea, and Mrs. Carey helped to clear away. Mrs. Carey seldom eat more than bread and butter, with a little stewed fruit to follow, but the Vicar had a slice of cold meat. Immediately after supper Mrs. Carey rang the bell for prayers, and then Philip went to bed. He rebelled against being undressed by Mary Ann and after a while succeeded in establishing his right to dress and undress himself. At nine o'clock Mary Ann brought in the eggs and the plate. Mrs. Carey wrote the date on each egg and put the number down in a book. She then took the plate-basket on her arm and went upstairs. Mr. Carey continued to read one of his old books, but as the clock struck ten he got up, put out the lamps, and followed his wife to bed.

When Philip arrived there was some difficulty in deciding on which evening he should have his bath. It was never easy to get plenty of hot water, since the kitchen boiler did not work, and it was impossible for two persons to have a bath on the same day. The only man who had a bathroom in Blackstable was Mr. Wilson,

and it was thought ostentatious of him. Mary Ann had her bath in the kitchen on Monday night, because she liked to begin the week clean. Uncle William could not have his on Saturday, because he had a heavy day before him and he was always a little tired after a bath, so he had it on Friday. Mrs. Carey had hers on Thursday for the same reason. It looked as though Saturday were naturally indicated for Philip, but Mary Ann said she couldn't keep the fire up on Saturday night: what with all the cooking on Sunday, having to make pastry and she didn't know what all, she did not feel up to giving the boy his bath on Saturday night; and it was quite clear that he could not bath himself. Mrs. Carey was shy about bathing a boy, and of course the Vicar had his sermon. But the Vicar insisted that Philip should be clean and sweet for the Lord's Day. Mary Ann said she would rather go than be put upon—and after eighteen years she didn't expect to have more work given her, and they might show some consideration—and Philip said he didn't want anyone to bath him, but could very well bath himself. This settled it. Mary Ann said she was quite sure he wouldn't bath himself properly, and rather than he should go dirty—and not because he was going into the presence of the Lord, but because she couldn't abide a boy who wasn't properly washed—she'd work herself to the bone even if it was Saturday night.

VII

SUNDAY was a day crowded with incident. Mr. Carey was accustomed to say that he was the only man in his parish who worked seven days a week.

The household got up half an hour earlier than usual. No lying abed for a poor parson on the day of rest, Mr. Carey remarked as Mary Ann knocked at the door punctually at eight. It took Mrs. Carey longer to dress, and she got down to breakfast at nine, a little breathless, only just before her husband. Mr. Carey's boots stood in front of the fire to warm. Prayers were longer than usual, and the breakfast more substantial. After breakfast the Vicar cut thin slices of bread for the communion, and Philip was privileged to cut off the crust. He was sent to the study to fetch a marble paperweight, with which Mr. Carey pressed the bread till it was thin and pulpy, and then it was cut into small squares. The amount was regulated by the weather. On a very bad day few people came to church, and on a very fine one, though many came, few stayed for communion. There were most when it was dry enough to make the walk to church pleasant, but not so fine that people wanted to hurry away.

Then Mrs. Carey brought the communion plate out of the safe, which stood in the pantry, and the Vicar polished it with a chamois leather. At ten the fly drove up, and Mr. Carey got into his boots. Mrs. Carey took several minutes to put on her bonnet, during which the Vicar, in a voluminous cloak, stood in the hall with just such an expression on his face as would have become an early Christian about to be led into the arena. It was extraordinary that after thirty years of marriage his wife could not be ready in time on Sunday morning. At last she came, in black satin; the Vicar did not like colours in a clergyman's wife at any time, but on Sundays he was determined that she should wear black; now and then, in conspiracy with Miss Graves, she ventured a white feather or a pink rose in her bonnet, but the Vicar insisted that it should disappear; he said he would not go to church with the scarlet woman: Mrs. Carey sighed as a woman but obeyed as a wife. They were about to step into the carriage when the Vicar remembered that no one had given him his egg. They knew that he must have an egg for his voice, there were two women

in the house, and no one had the least regard for his comfort. Mrs. Carey scolded Mary Ann, and Mary Ann answered that she could not think of everything. She hurried away to fetch an egg, and Mrs. Carey beat it up in a glass of sherry. The Vicar swallowed it at a gulp. The communion plate was stowed in the carriage, and they set off.

The fly came from *The Red Lion* and had a peculiar smell of stale straw. They drove with both windows closed so that the Vicar should not catch cold. The sexton was waiting at the porch to take the communion plate, and while the Vicar went to the vestry Mrs. Carey and Philip settled themselves in the vicarage pew. Mrs. Carey placed in front of her the sixpenny bit she was accustomed to put in the plate, and gave Philip threepence for the same purpose. The church filled up gradually and the service began.

Philip grew bored during the sermon, but if he fidgetted Mrs. Carey put a gentle hand on his arm and looked at him reproachfully. He regained interest when the final hymn was sung and Mr. Graves passed round with the plate.

When everyone had gone Mrs. Carey went into Miss Graves' pew to have a few words with her while they were waiting for the gentlemen, and Philip went to the vestry. His uncle, the curate, and Mr. Graves were still in their surplices. Mr. Carey gave him the remains of the consecrated bread and told him he might eat it. He had been accustomed to eat it himself, as it seemed blasphemous to throw it away, but Philip's keen appetite relieved him from the duty. Then they counted the money. It consisted of pennies, sixpences and threepenny bits. There were always two single shillings, one put in the plate by the Vicar and the other by Mr. Graves; and sometimes there was a florin. Mr. Graves told the Vicar who had given this. It was always a stranger to Blackstable, and Mr. Carey wondered who he was. But Miss Graves had observed the rash act and was able to tell Mrs. Carey that the stranger came from London, was married and had children. During the drive home Mrs. Carey passed the information on, and the Vicar made up his mind to call on him and ask for a subscription to the Additional Curates Society. Mr. Carey asked if Philip had behaved properly; and Mrs. Carey remarked that Mrs. Wigram had a new mantle, Mr. Cox was not in church, and somebody thought that Miss Phillips was engaged. When they reached the vicarage they all felt that they deserved a substantial dinner.

When this was over Mrs. Carey went to her room to rest, and

Mr. Carey lay down on the sofa in the drawing-room for forty winks.

They had tea at five, and the Vicar eat an egg to support himself for evensong. Mrs. Carey did not go to this so that Mary Ann might, but she read the service through and the hymns. Mr. Carey walked to church in the evening, and Philip limped along by his side. The walk through the darkness along the country road strangely impressed him, and the church with all its lights in the distance, coming gradually nearer, seemed very friendly. At first he was shy with his uncle, but little by little grew used to him, and he would slip his hand in his uncle's and walk more easily for the feeling of protection.

They had supper when they got home. Mr. Carey's slippers were waiting for him on a footstool in front of the fire and by their side Philip's, one the shoe of a small boy, the other misshapen and odd. He was dreadfully tired when he went up to bed, and he did not resist when Mary Ann undressed him. She kissed him after she tucked him up, and he began to love her.

VIII

Philip had led always the solitary life of an only child, and his loneliness at the vicarage was no greater than it had been when his mother lived. He made friends with Mary Ann. She was a chubby little person of thirty-five, the daughter of a fisherman, and had come to the vicarage at eighteen; it was her first place and she had no intention of leaving it; but she held a possible marriage as a rod over the timid heads of her master and mistress. Her father and mother lived in a little house off Harbour Street, and she went to see them on her evenings out. Her stories of the sea touched Philip's imagination, and the narrow alleys round the harbour grew rich with the romance which his young fancy lent them. One evening he asked whether he might go home with her; but his aunt was afraid that he might catch something, and his uncle said that evil communications corrupted good manners. He disliked the fisher folk, who were rough, uncouth, and went to chapel. But Philip was more comfortable in the kitchen than in the dining-room, and, whenever he could, he took his toys and played there. His aunt was not sorry. She did not like disorder, and though she recognised that boys must be expected to be untidy she preferred that he should make a mess in the kitchen. If he fidgetted his uncle was apt to grow restless and say it was high time he went to school. Mrs. Carey thought Philip very young for this, and her heart went out to the motherless child; but her attempts to gain his affection were awkward, and the boy, feeling shy, received her demonstrations with so much sullenness that she was mortified. Sometimes she heard his shrill voice raised in laughter in the kitchen, but when she went in, he grew suddenly silent, and he flushed darkly when Mary Ann explained the joke. Mrs. Carey could not see anything amusing in what she heard, and she smiled with constraint.

"He seems happier with Mary Ann than with us, William," she said, when she returned to her sewing.

"One can see he's been very badly brought up. He wants licking into shape."

On the second Sunday after Philip arrived an unlucky incident occurred. Mr. Carey had retired as usual after dinner for a little snooze in the drawing-room, but he was in an irritable mood and could not sleep. Josiah Graves that morning had objected

strongly to some candlesticks with which the Vicar had adorned the altar. He had bought them second-hand in Tercanbury, and he thought they looked very well. But Josiah Graves said they were popish. This was a taunt that always aroused the Vicar. He had been at Oxford during the movement which ended in the secession from the Established Church of Edward Manning, and he felt a certain sympathy for the Church of Rome. He would willingly have made the service more ornate than had been usual in the low-church parish of Blackstable, and in his secret soul he yearned for processions and lighted candles. He drew the line at incense. He hated the word protestant. He called himself a Catholic. He was accustomed to say that Papists required an epithet, they were Roman Catholic; but the Church of England was Catholic in the best, the fullest, and the noblest sense of the term. He was pleased to think that his shaven face gave him the look of a priest, and in his youth he had possessed an ascetic air which added to the impression. He often related that on one of his holidays in Boulogne, one of those holidays upon which his wife for economy's sake did not accompany him, when he was sitting in a church, the *curé* had come up to him and invited him to preach a sermon. He dismissed his curates when they married, having decided views on the celibacy of the unbeneficed clergy. But when at an election the Liberals had written on his garden fence in large blue letters: This way to Rome, he had been very angry, and threatened to prosecute the leaders of the Liberal party in Blackstable. He made up his mind now that nothing Josiah Graves said would induce him to remove the candlesticks from the altar, and he muttered Bismarck to himself once or twice irritably.

Suddenly he heard an unexpected noise. He pulled the handkerchief off his face, got up from the sofa on which he was lying, and went into the dining-room. Philip was seated on the table with all his bricks around him. He had built a monstrous castle, and some defect in the foundation had just brought the structure down in noisy ruin.

"What are you doing with those bricks, Philip? You know you're not allowed to play games on Sunday."

Philip stared at him for a moment with frightened eyes, and, as his habit was, flushed deeply.

"I always used to play at home," he answered.

"I'm sure your dear mamma never allowed you to do such a wicked thing as that."

Philip did not know it was wicked; but if it was, he did not

wish it to be supposed that his mother had consented to it. He hung his head and did not answer.

"Don't you know it's very, very wicked to play on Sunday? What d'you suppose it's called the day of rest for? You're going to church tonight, and how can you face your Maker when you've been breaking one of His laws in the afternoon?"

Mr. Carey told him to put the bricks away at once, and stood over him while Philip did so.

"You're a very naughty boy," he repeated. "Think of the grief you're causing your poor mother in heaven."

Philip felt inclined to cry, but he had an instinctive disinclination to letting other people see his tears, and he clenched his teeth to prevent the sobs from escaping. Mr. Carey sat down in his arm-chair and began to turn over the pages of a book. Philip stood at the window. The vicarage was set back from the high-road to Tercanbury, and from the dining-room one saw a semi-circular strip of lawn and then as far as the horizon green fields. Sheep were grazing in them. The sky was forlorn and gray. Philip felt infinitely unhappy.

Presently Mary Ann came in to lay the tea, and Aunt Louisa descended the stairs.

"Have you had a nice little nap, William?" she asked.

"No," he answered. "Philip made so much noise that I couldn't sleep a wink."

This was not quite accurate, for he had been kept awake by his own thoughts; and Philip, listening sullenly, reflected that he had only made a noise once, and there was no reason why his uncle should not have slept before or after. When Mrs. Carey asked for an explanation the Vicar narrated the facts.

"He hasn't even said he was sorry," he finished.

"Oh, Philip, I'm sure you're sorry," said Mrs. Carey, anxious that the child should not seem wickeder to his uncle than need be.

Philip did not reply. He went on munching his bread and butter. He did not know what power it was in him that prevented him from making any expression of regret. He felt his ears tingling, he was a little inclined to cry, but no word would issue from his lips.

"You needn't make it worse by sulking," said Mr. Carey.

Tea was finished in silence. Mrs. Carey looked at Philip surreptitiously now and then, but the Vicar elaborately ignored him. When Philip saw his uncle go upstairs to get ready for church he went into the hall and got his hat and coat, but when the Vicar came downstairs and saw him, he said:

"I don't wish you to go to church tonight, Philip. I don't think you're in a proper frame of mind to enter the House of God."

Philip did not say a word. He felt it was a deep humiliation that was placed upon him, and his cheeks reddened. He stood silently watching his uncle put on his broad hat and his voluminous cloak. Mrs. Carey as usual went to the door to see him off. Then she turned to Philip.

"Never mind, Philip, you won't be a naughty boy next Sunday, will you, and then your uncle will take you to church with him in the evening."

She took off his hat and coat, and led him into the dining-room.

"Shall you and I read the service together, Philip, and we'll sing the hymns at the harmonium. Would you like that?"

Philip shook his head decidedly. Mrs. Carey was taken aback. If he would not read the evening service with her she did not know what to do with him.

"Then what would you like to do until your uncle comes back?" she asked helplessly.

Philip broke his silence at last.

"I want to be left alone," he said.

"Philip, how can you say anything so unkind? Don't you know that your uncle and I only want your good? Don't you love me at all?"

"I hate you. I wish you was dead."

Mrs. Carey gasped. He said the words so savagely that it gave her quite a start. She had nothing to say. She sat down in her husband's chair; and as she thought of her desire to love the friendless, crippled boy and her eager wish that he should love her—she was a barren woman and, even though it was clearly God's will that she should be childless, she could scarcely bear to look at little children sometimes, her heart ached so—the tears rose to her eyes and one by one, slowly, rolled down her cheeks. Philip watched her in amazement. She took out her handkerchief, and now she cried without restraint. Suddenly Philip realised that she was crying because of what he had said, and he was sorry. He went up to her silently and kissed her. It was the first kiss he had ever given her without being asked. And the poor lady, so small in her black satin, shrivelled up and sallow, with her funny corkscrew curls, took the little boy on her lap and put her arms around him and wept as though her heart would break. But her tears were partly tears of happiness, for she felt that the strangeness between them was gone. She loved him now with a new love because he had made her suffer.

IX

On the following Sunday, when the Vicar was making his preparations to go into the drawing-room for his nap—all the actions of his life were conducted with ceremony—and Mrs. Carey was about to go upstairs, Philip asked:

"What shall I do if I'm not allowed to play?"

"Can't you sit still for once and be quiet?"

"I can't sit still till tea-time."

Mr. Carey looked out of the window, but it was cold and raw, and he could not suggest that Philip should go into the garden.

"I know what you can do. You can learn by heart the collect for the day."

He took the prayer-book which was used for prayers from the harmonium, and turned the pages till he came to the place he wanted.

"It's not a long one. If you can say it without a mistake when I come in to tea you shall have the top of my egg."

Mrs. Carey drew up Philip's chair to the dining-room table—they had bought him a high chair by now—and placed the book in front of him.

"The devil finds work for idle hands to do," said Mr. Carey.

He put some more coals on the fire so that there should be a cheerful blaze when he came in to tea, and went into the drawing-room. He loosened his collar, arranged the cushions, and settled himself comfortably on the sofa. But thinking the drawing-room a little chilly, Mrs. Carey brought him a rug from the hall; she put it over his legs and tucked it round his feet. She drew the blinds so that the light should not offend his eyes, and since he had closed them already went out of the room on tiptoe. The Vicar was at peace with himself today, and in ten minutes he was asleep. He snored softly.

It was the Sixth Sunday after Epiphany, and the collect began with the words: *O God, whose blessed Son was manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil, and make us the sons of God, and heirs of Eternal life.* Philip read it through. He could make no sense of it. He began saying the words aloud to himself, but many of them were unknown to him, and the construction of the sentences was strange. He could not get more than two lines

in his head. And his attention was constantly wandering: there were fruit trees trained on the walls of the vicarage, and a long twig beat now and then against the windowpane; sheep grazed stolidly in the field beyond the garden. It seemed as though there were knots inside his brain. Then panic seized him that he would not know the words by tea-time, and he kept on whispering them to himself quickly; he did not try to understand, but merely to get them parrot-like into his memory.

Mrs. Carey could not sleep that afternoon, and by four o'clock she was so wide awake that she came downstairs. She thought she would hear Philip his collect so that he should make no mistakes when he said it to his uncle. His uncle then would be pleased; he would see that the boy's heart was in the right place. But when Mrs. Carey came to the dining-room and was about to go in, she heard a sound that made her stop suddenly. Her heart gave a little jump. She turned away and quietly slipped out of the front-door. She walked round the house till she came to the dining-room window and then cautiously looked in. Philip was still sitting on the chair she had put him in, but his head was on the table buried in his arms, and he was sobbing desperately. She saw the convulsive movement of his shoulders. Mrs. Carey was frightened. A thing that had always struck her about the child was that he seemed so collected. She had never seen him cry. And now she realised that his calmness was some instinctive shame of showing his feelings: he hid himself to weep.

Without thinking that her husband disliked being wakened suddenly, she burst into the drawing-room.

"William, William," she said. "The boy's crying as though his heart would break."

Mr. Carey sat up and disentangled himself from the rug about his legs.

"What's he got to cry about?"

"I don't know. . . . Oh, William, we can't let the boy be unhappy. D'you think it's our fault? If we'd had children we'd have known what to do."

Mr. Carey looked at her in perplexity. He felt extraordinarily helpless.

"He can't be crying because I gave him the collect to learn. It's not more than ten lines."

"Don't you think I might take him some picture books to look at, William? There are some of the Holy Land. There couldn't be anything wrong in that."

"Very well, I don't mind."

Mrs. Carey went into the study. To collect books was Mr. Carey's only passion, and he never went into Tercanbury without spending an hour or two in the second-hand shop; he always brought back four or five musty volumes. He never read them, for he had long lost the habit of reading, but he liked to turn the pages, look at the illustrations if they were illustrated, and mend the bindings. He welcomed wet days because on them he could stay at home without pangs of conscience and spend the afternoon with white of egg and a glue-pot, patching up the Russia leather of some battered quarto. He had many volumes of old travels, with steel engravings, and Mrs. Carey quickly found two which described Palestine. She coughed elaborately at the door so that Philip should have time to compose himself, she felt that he would be humiliated if she came upon him in the midst of his tears, then she rattled the door handle. When she went in Philip was poring over the prayer-book, hiding his eyes with his hands so that she might not see he had been crying.

"Do you know the collect yet?" she said.

He did not answer for a moment, and she felt that he did not trust his voice. She was oddly embarrassed.

"I can't learn it by heart," he said at last, with a gasp.

"Oh, well, never mind," she said. "You needn't. I've got some picture books for you to look at. Come and sit on my lap, and we'll look at them together."

Philip slipped off his chair and limped over to her. He looked down so that she should not see his eyes. She put her arms round him.

"Look," she said, "that's the place where our Blessed Lord was born."

She showed him an Eastern town with flat roofs and cupolas and minarets. In the foreground was a group of palm-trees, and under them were resting two Arabs and some camels. Philip passed his hand over the picture as if he wanted to feel the houses and the loose habiliments of the nomads.

"Read what it says," he asked.

Mrs. Carey in her even voice read the opposite page. It was a romantic narrative of some Eastern traveller of the thirties, pompous maybe, but fragrant with the emotion with which the East came to the generation that followed Byron and Chateaubriand. In a moment or two Philip interrupted her.

"I want to see another picture."

When Mary Ann came in and Mrs. Carey rose to help her lay the cloth. Philip took the book in his hands and hurried through

the illustrations. It was with difficulty that his aunt induced him to put the book down for tea. He had forgotten his horrible struggle to get the collect by heart; he had forgotten his tears. Next day it was raining, and he asked for the book again. Mrs. Carey gave it him joyfully. Talking over his future with her husband she had found that both desired him to take orders, and this eagerness for the book which described places hallowed by the presence of Jesus seemed a good sign. It looked as though the boy's mind addressed itself naturally to holy things. But in a day or two he asked for more books. Mr. Carey took him into his study, showed him the shelf in which he kept illustrated works, and chose for him one that dealt with Rome. Philip took it greedily. The pictures led him to a new amusement. He began to read the page before and the page after each engraving to find out what it was about, and soon he lost all interest in his toys.

Then, when no one was near, he took out books for himself; and perhaps because the first impression on his mind was made by an Eastern town, he found his chief amusement in those which described the Levant. His heart beat with excitement at the pictures of mosques and rich palaces; but there was one, in a book on Constantinople, which peculiarly stirred his imagination. It was called the Hall of the Thousand Columns. It was a Byzantine cistern, which the popular fancy had endowed with fantastic vastness; and the legend which he read told that a boat was always moored at the entrance to tempt the unwary, but no traveller venturing into the darkness had ever been seen again. And Philip wondered whether the boat went on for ever through one pillared alley after another or came at last to some strange mansion.

One day a good fortune befell him, for he hit upon Lane's translation of *The Thousand Nights and a Night.* He was captured first by the illustrations, and then he began to read, to start with, the stories that dealt with magic, and then the others; and those he liked he read again and again. He could think of nothing else. He forgot the life about him. He had to be called two or three times before he would come to his dinner. Insensibly he formed the most delightful habit in the world, the habit of reading: he did not know that thus he was providing himself with a refuge from all the distress of life; he did not know either that he was creating for himself an unreal world which would make the real world of every day a source of bitter disappointment. Presently he began to read other things. His brain was precocious His uncle and aunt, seeing that he occupied himself and neither

worried nor made a noise, ceased to trouble themselves about him. Mr. Carey had so many books that he did not know them, and as he read little he forgot the odd lots he had bought at one time and another because they were cheap. Haphazard among the sermons and homilies, the travels, the lives of the Saints, the Fathers, the histories of the church, were old-fashioned novels; and these Philip at last discovered. He chose them by their titles, and the first he read was *The Lancashire Witches,* and then he read *The Admirable Crichton,* and then many more. Whenever he started a book with two solitary travellers riding along the brink of a desperate ravine he knew he was safe.

The summer was come now, and the gardener, an old sailor, made him a hammock and fixed it up for him in the branches of a weeping willow. And here for long hours he lay, hidden from anyone who might come to the vicarage, reading, reading passionately. Time passed and it was July; August came: on Sundays the church was crowded with strangers, and the collection at the offertory often amounted to two pounds. Neither the Vicar nor Mrs. Carey went out of the garden much during this period; for they disliked strange faces, and they looked upon the visitors from London with aversion. The house opposite was taken for six weeks by a gentleman who had two little boys, and he sent in to ask if Philip would like to go and play with them; but Mrs. Carey returned a polite refusal. She was afraid that Philip would be corrupted by little boys from London. He was going to be a clergyman, and it was necessary that he should be preserved from contamination. She liked to see in him an infant Samuel.

X

THE Careys made up their minds to send Philip to King's School at Tercanbury. The neighbouring clergy sent their sons there. It was united by long tradition to the Cathedral: its headmaster was an honorary Canon, and a past headmaster was the Archdeacon. Boys were encouraged there to aspire to Holy Orders, and the education was such as might prepare an honest lad to spend his life in God's service. A preparatory school was attached to it, and to this it was arranged that Philip should go. Mr. Carey took him into Tercanbury one Thursday afternoon towards the end of September. All day Philip had been excited and rather frightened. He knew little of school life but what he had read in the stories of *The Boy's Own Paper*. He had also read *Eric, or Little by Little*.

When they got out of the train at Tercanbury, Philip felt sick with apprehension, and during the drive in to the town sat pale and silent. The high brick wall in front of the school gave it the look of a prison. There was a little door in it, which opened on their ringing; and a clumsy, untidy man came out and fetched Philip's tin trunk and his play-box. They were shown into the drawing-room; it was filled with massive, ugly furniture, and the chairs of the suite were placed round the walls with a forbidding rigidity. They waited for the headmaster.

"What's Mr. Watson like?" asked Philip, after a while.

"You'll see for yourself."

There was another pause. Mr. Carey wondered why the headmaster did not come. Presently Philip made an effort and spoke again.

"Tell him I've got a club-foot," he said.

Before Mr. Carey could speak the door burst open and Mr. Watson swept into the room. To Philip he seemed gigantic. He was a man of over six feet high, and broad, with enormous hands and a great red beard; he talked loudly in a jovial manner; but his aggressive cheerfulness struck terror in Philip's heart. He shook hands with Mr. Carey, and then took Philip's small hand in his.

"Well, young fellow, are you glad to come to school?" he shouted.

Philip reddened and found no word to answer.

"How old are you?"

"Nine," said Philip.

"You must say sir," said his uncle.

"I expect you've got a good lot to learn," the headmaster bellowed cheerily.

To give the boy confidence he began to tickle him with rough fingers. Philip, feeling shy and uncomfortable, squirmed under his touch.

"I've put him in the small dormitory for the present. . . . You'll like that, won't you?" he added to Philip. "Only eight of you in there. You won't feel so strange."

Then the door opened, and Mrs. Watson came in. She was a dark woman with black hair, neatly parted in the middle. She had curiously thick lips and a small round nose. Her eyes were large and black. There was a singular coldness in her appearance. She seldom spoke and smiled more seldom still. Her husband introduced Mr. Carey to her, and then gave Philip a friendly push towards her.

"This is a new boy, Helen. His name's Carey."

Without a word she shook hands with Philip and then sat down, not speaking, while the headmaster asked Mr. Carey how much Philip knew and what books he had been working with. The Vicar of Blackstable was a little embarrassed by Mr. Watson's boisterous heartiness, and in a moment or two got up.

"I think I'd better leave Philip with you now."

"That's all right," said Mr. Watson. "He'll be safe with me. He'll get on like a house on fire. Won't you, young fellow?"

Without waiting for an answer from Philip the big man burst into a great bellow of laughter. Mr. Carey kissed Philip on the forehead and went away.

"Come along, young fellow," shouted Mr. Watson. "I'll show you the school-room."

He swept out of the drawing-room with giant strides, and Philip hurriedly limped behind him. He was taken into a long, bare room with two tables that ran along its whole length; on each side of them were wooden forms.

"Nobody much here yet," said Mr. Watson. "I'll just show you the playground, and then I'll leave you to shift for yourself."

Mr. Watson led the way. Philip found himself in a large play-ground with high brick walls on three sides of it. On the fourth side was an iron railing through which you saw a vast lawn and beyond this some of the buildings of King's School. One

small boy was wandering disconsolately, kicking up the gravel as he walked.

"Hulloa, Venning," shouted Mr. Watson. "When did you turn up?"

The small boy came forward and shook hands.

"Here's a new boy. He's older and bigger than you, so don't you bully him."

The headmaster glared amicably at the two children, filling them with fear by the roar of his voice, and then with a guffaw left them.

"What's your name?"

"Carey."

"What's your father?"

"He's dead."

"Oh! Does your mother wash?"

"My mother's dead, too."

Philip thought this answer would cause the boy a certain awkwardness, but Venning was not to be turned from his facetiousness for so little.

"Well, did she wash?" he went on.

"Yes," said Philip indignantly.

"She was a washerwoman then?"

"No, she wasn't."

"Then she didn't wash."

The little boy crowed with delight at the success of his dialectic. Then he caught sight of Philip's feet.

"What's the matter with your foot?"

Philip instinctively tried to withdraw it from sight. He hid it behind the one which was whole.

"I've got a club-foot," he answered.

"How did you get it?"

"I've always had it."

"Let's have a look."

"No."

"Don't then."

The little boy accompanied the words with a sharp kick on Philip's shin, which Philip did not expect and thus could not guard against. The pain was so great that it made him gasp, but greater than the pain was the surprise. He did not know why Venning kicked him. He had not the presence of mind to give him a black eye. Besides, the boy was smaller than he, and he had read in *The Boy's Own Paper* that it was a mean thing to hit anyone smaller than yourself. While Philip was nursing his

shin a third boy appeared, and his tormentor left him. In a little while he noticed that the pair were talking about him, and he felt they were looking at his feet. He grew hot and uncomfortable.

But others arrived, a dozen together, and then more, and they began to talk about their doings during the holidays, where they had been, and what wonderful cricket they had played. A few new boys appeared, and with these presently Philip found himself talking. He was shy and nervous. He was anxious to make himself pleasant, but he could not think of anything to say. He was asked a great many questions and answered them all quite willingly. One boy asked him whether he could play cricket.

"No," answered Philip. "I've got a club-foot."

The boy looked down quickly and reddened. Philip saw that he felt he had asked an unseemly question. He was too shy to apologise and looked at Philip awkwardly.

XI

Next morning when the clanging of a bell awoke Philip he looked round his cubicle in astonishment. Then a voice sang out, and he remembered where he was.

"Are you awake, Singer?"

The partitions of the cubicle were of polished pitch-pine, and there was a green curtain in front. In those days there was little thought of ventilation, and the windows were closed except when the dormitory was aired in the morning.

Philip got up and knelt down to say his prayers. It was a cold morning, and he shivered a little; but he had been taught by his uncle that his prayers were more acceptable to God if he said them in his nightshirt than if he waited till he was dressed. This did not surprise him, for he was beginning to realise that he was the creature of a God who appreciated the discomfort of his worshippers. Then he washed. There were two baths for the fifty boarders, and each boy had a bath once a week. The rest of his washing was done in a small basin on a wash-stand, which, with the bed and a chair, made up the furniture of each cubicle. The boys chatted gaily while they dressed. Philip was all ears. Then another bell sounded, and they ran downstairs. They took their seats on the forms on each side of the two long tables in the school-room; and Mr. Watson, followed by his wife and the servants, came in and sat down. Mr. Watson read prayers in an impressive manner, and the supplications thundered out in his loud voice as though they were threats personally addressed to each boy. Philip listened with anxiety. Then Mr. Watson read a chapter from the Bible, and the servants trooped out. In a moment the untidy youth brought in two large pots of tea and on a second journey immense dishes of bread and butter.

Philip had a squeamish appetite, and the thick slabs of poor butter on the bread turned his stomach, but he saw other boys scraping it off and followed their example. They all had potted meats and such like, which they had brought in their play-boxes; and some had 'extras,' eggs or bacon, upon which Mr. Watson made a profit. When he had asked Mr. Carey whether Philip was to have these, Mr. Carey replied that he did not think boys should be spoilt. Mr. Watson quite agreed with him—he

considered nothing was better than bread and butter for growing lads—but some parents, unduly pampering their offspring, insisted on it.

Philip noticed that 'extras' gave boys a certain consideration and made up his mind, when he wrote to Aunt Louisa, to ask for them.

After breakfast the boys wandered out into the play-ground. Here the day-boys were gradually assembling. They were sons of the local clergy, of the officers at the Depot, and of such manufacturers or men of business as the old town possessed. Presently a bell rang, and they all trooped into school. This consisted of a large, long room at opposite ends of which two under-masters conducted the second and third forms, and of a smaller one, leading out of it, used by Mr. Watson, who taught the first form. To attach the preparatory to the senior school these three classes were known officially, on speech days and in reports, as upper, middle, and lower second. Philip was put in the last. The master, a red-faced man with a pleasant voice, was called Rice; he had a jolly manner with boys, and the time passed quickly. Philip was surprised when it was a quarter to eleven and they were let out for ten minutes' rest.

The whole school rushed noisily into the play-ground. The new boys were told to go into the middle, while the others stationed themselves along opposite walls. They began to play *Pig in the Middle.* The old boys ran from wall to wall while the new boys tried to catch them: when one was seized and the mystic words said—one, two, three, and a pig for me—he became a prisoner and, turning sides, helped to catch those who were still free. Philip saw a boy running past and tried to catch him, but his limp gave him no chance; and the runners, taking their opportunity, made straight for the ground he covered. Then one of them had the brilliant idea of imitating Philip's clumsy run. Other boys saw it and began to laugh; then they all copied the first; and they ran round Philip, limping grotesquely, screaming in their treble voices with shrill laughter. They lost their heads with the delight of their new amusement, and choked with helpless merriment. One of them tripped Philip up and he fell, heavily as he always fell, and cut his knee. They laughed all the louder when he got up. A boy pushed him from behind, and he would have fallen again if another had not caught him. The game was forgotten in the entertainment of Philip's deformity. One of them invented an odd, rolling limp that struck the rest as supremely ridiculous, and several of the boys lay down on the ground and

rolled about in laughter: Philip was completely scared. He could not make out why they were laughing at him. His heart beat so that he could hardly breathe, and he was more frightened than he had ever been in his life. He stood still stupidly while the boys ran round him, mimicking and laughing; they shouted to him to try and catch them; but he did not move. He did not want them to see him run any more. He was using all his strength to prevent himself from crying.

Suddenly the bell rang, and they all trooped back to school. Philip's knee was bleeding, and he was dusty and dishevelled. For some minutes Mr. Rice could not control his form. They were excited still by the strange novelty, and Philip saw one or two of them furtively looking down at his feet. He tucked them under the bench.

In the afternoon they went up to play football, but Mr. Watson stopped Philip on the way out after dinner.

"I suppose you can't play football, Carey?" he asked him.

Philip blushed self-consciously.

"No, sir."

"Very well. You'd better go up to the field. You can walk as far as that, can't you?"

Philip had no idea where the field was, but he answered all the same.

"Yes, sir."

The boys went in charge of Mr. Rice, who glanced at Philip and, seeing he had not changed, asked why he was not going to play

"Mr. Watson said I needn't, sir," said Philip.

"Why?"

There were boys all round him, looking at him curiously, and a feeling of shame came over Philip. He looked down without answering. Others gave the reply.

"He's got a club-foot, sir."

"Oh, I see."

Mr. Rice was quite young; he had only taken his degree a year before; and he was suddenly embarrassed. His instinct was to beg the boy's pardon, but he was too shy to do so. He made his voice gruff and loud.

"Now then, you boys, what are you waiting about for? Get on with you."

Some of them had already started and those that were left now set off, in groups of two or three.

"You'd better come along with me, Carey," said the master "You don't know the way, do you?"

Philip guessed the kindness, and a sob came to his throat.

"I can't go very fast, sir."

"Then I'll go very slow," said the master, with a smile.

Philip's heart went out to the red-faced, commonplace young man who said a gentle word to him. He suddenly felt less unhappy.

But at night when they went up to bed and were undressing, the boy who was called Singer came out of his cubicle and put his head in Philip's.

"I say, let's look at your foot," he said.

"No," answered Philip.

He jumped into bed quickly.

"Don't say no to me," said Singer. "Come on, Mason."

The boy in the next cubicle was looking round the corner, and at the words he slipped in. They made for Philip and tried to tear the bed-clothes off him, but he held them tightly.

"Why can't you leave me alone?" he cried.

Singer seized a brush and with the back of it beat Philip's hands clenched on the blanket. Philip cried out.

"Why don't you show us your foot quietly?"

"I won't."

In desperation Philip clenched his fist and hit the boy who tormented him, but he was at a disadvantage, and the boy seized his arm. He began to turn it.

"Oh, don't, don't," said Philip. "You'll break my arm."

"Stop still then and put out your foot."

Philip gave a sob and a gasp. The boy gave the arm another wrench. The pain was unendurable.

"All right. I'll do it," said Philip.

He put out his foot. Singer still kept his hand on Philip's wrist. He looked curiously at the deformity.

"Isn't it beastly?" said Mason.

Another came in and looked too.

"Ugh," he said, in disgust.

"My word, it is rum," said Singer, making a face. "Is it hard?"

He touched it with the tip of his forefinger, cautiously, as though it were something that had a life of its own. Suddenly they heard Mr. Watson's heavy tread on the stairs. They threw the clothes back on Philip and dashed like rabbits into their cubicles. Mr. Watson came into the dormitory. Raising himself on tiptoe he could see over the rod that bore the green curtain, and he looked into two or three of the cubicles. The little boys were safely in bed. He put out the light and went out.

Singer called out to Philip, but he did not answer. He had got his teeth in the pillow so that his sobbing should be inaudible. He was not crying for the pain they had caused him, nor for the humiliation he had suffered when they looked at his foot, but with rage at himself because, unable to stand the torture, he had put out his foot of his own accord.

And then he felt the misery of his life. It seemed to his childish mind that this unhappiness must go on for ever. For no particular reason he remembered that cold morning when Emma had taken him out of bed and put him beside his mother. He had not thought of it once since it happened, but now he seemed to feel the warmth of his mother's body against his and her arms around him. Suddenly it seemed to him that his life was a dream, his mother's death, and the life at the vicarage, and these two wretched days at school, and he would awake in the morning and be back again at home. His tears dried as he thought of it. He was too unhappy, it must be nothing but a dream, and his mother was alive, and Emma would come up presently and go to bed. He fell asleep.

But when he awoke next morning it was to the clanging of a bell, and the first thing his eyes saw was the green curtain of his cubicle.

XII

As time went on Philip's deformity ceased to interest. It was accepted like one boy's red hair and another's unreasonable corpulence. But meanwhile he had grown horribly sensitive. He never ran if he could help it, because he knew it made his limp more conspicuous, and he adopted a peculiar walk. He stood still as much as he could, with his club-foot behind the other, so that it should not attract notice, and he was constantly on the look out for any reference to it. Because he could not join in the games which other boys played, their life remained strange to him; he only interested himself from the outside in their doings; and it seemed to him that there was a barrier between them and him. Sometimes they seemed to think that it was his fault if he could not play football, and he was unable to make them understand. He was left a good deal to himself. He had been inclined to talkativeness, but gradually he became silent. He began to think of the difference between himself and others.

The biggest boy in his dormitory, Singer, took a dislike to him, and Philip, small for his age, had to put up with a good deal of hard treatment. About half-way through the term a mania ran through the school for a game called Nibs. It was a game for two, played on a table or a form with steel pens. You had to push your nib with the finger-nail so as to get the point of it over your opponent's, while he manœuvred to prevent this and to get the point of his nib over the back of yours; when this result was achieved you breathed on the ball of your thumb, pressed it hard on the two nibs, and if you were able then to lift them without dropping either, both nibs became yours. Soon nothing was seen but boys playing this game, and the more skilful acquired vast stores of nibs. But in a little while Mr. Watson made up his mind that it was a form of gambling, forbade the game, and confiscated all the nibs in the boys' possession. Philip had been very adroit, and it was with a heavy heart that he gave up his winnings; but his fingers itched to play still, and a few days later, on his way to the football field, he went into a shop and bought a pennyworth of J pens. He carried them loose in his pocket and enjoyed feeling them. Presently Singer found out that he had them. Singer had given up his nibs too, but he had kept

back a very large one, called a Jumbo, which was almost unconquerable, and he could not resist the opportunity of getting Philip's Js out of him. Though Philip knew that he was at a disadvantage with his small nibs, he had an adventurous disposition and was willing to take the risk; besides, he was aware that Singer would not allow him to refuse. He had not played for a week and sat down to the game now with a thrill of excitement. He lost two of his small nibs quickly, and Singer was jubilant, but the third time by some chance the Jumbo slipped round and Philip was able to push his J across it. He crowed with triumph. At that moment Mr. Watson came in.

"What are you doing?" he asked.

He looked from Singer to Philip, but neither answered.

"Don't you know that I've forbidden you to play that idiotic game?"

Philip's heart beat fast. He knew what was coming and was dreadfully frightened, but in his fright there was a certain exultation. He had never been swished. Of course it would hurt, but it was something to boast about afterwards.

"Come into my study."

The headmaster turned, and they followed him side by side. Singer whispered to Philip:

"We're in for it."

Mr. Watson pointed to Singer.

"Bend over," he said.

Philip, very white, saw the boy quiver at each stroke, and after the third he heard him cry out. Three more followed.

"That'll do. Get up."

Singer stood up. The tears were streaming down his face. Philip stepped forward. Mr. Watson looked at him for a moment.

"I'm not going to cane you. You're a new boy. And I can't hit a cripple. Go away, both of you, and don't be naughty again."

When they got back into the school-room a group of boys, who had learned in some mysterious way what was happening, were waiting for them. They set upon Singer at once with eager questions. Singer faced them, his face red with the pain and marks of tears still on his cheeks. He pointed with his head at Philip, who was standing a little behind him.

"He got off because he's a cripple," he said angrily.

Philip stood silent and flushed. He felt that they looked at him with contempt.

"How many did you get?" one boy asked Singer.

But he did not answer. He was angry because he had been hurt

"Don't ask me to play Nibs with you again," he said to Philip. "It's jolly nice for you. You don't risk anything."

"I didn't ask you."

"Didn't you!"

He quickly put out his foot and tripped Philip up. Philip was always rather unsteady on his feet, and he fell heavily to the ground.

"Cripple," said Singer.

For the rest of the term he tormented Philip cruelly, and, though Philip tried to keep out of his way, the school was so small that it was impossible; he tried being friendly and jolly with him; he abased himself so far as to buy him a knife; but though Singer took the knife he was not placated. Once or twice, driven beyond endurance, he hit and kicked the bigger boy, but Singer was so much stronger that Philip was helpless, and he was always forced after more or less torture to beg his pardon. It was that which rankled with Philip: he could not bear the humiliation of apologies, which were wrung from him by pain greater than he could bear. And what made it worse was that there seemed no end to his wretchedness; Singer was only eleven and would not go to the upper school till he was thirteen. Philip realised that he must live two years with a tormentor from whom there was no escape. He was only happy while he was working and when he got into bed. And often there recurred to him then that queer feeling that his life with all its misery was nothing but a dream, and that he would awake in the morning in his own little bed in London.

XIII

Two years passed, and Philip was nearly twelve. He was in the first form, within two or three places of the top, and after Christmas when several boys would be leaving for the senior school he would be head boy. He had already quite a collection of prizes, worthless books on bad paper, but in gorgeous bindings decorated with the arms of the school: his position had freed him from bullying, and he was not unhappy. His fellows forgave him his success because of his deformity.

"After all, it's jolly easy for him to get prizes," they said, "there's nothing he *can* do but swat."

He had lost his early terror of Mr. Watson. He had grown used to the loud voice, and when the headmaster's heavy hand was laid on his shoulder Philip discerned vaguely the intention of a caress. He had the good memory which is more useful for scholastic achievements than mental power, and he knew Mr. Watson expected him to leave the preparatory school with a scholarship.

But he had grown very self-conscious. The new-born child does not realise that his body is more a part of himself than surrounding objects, and will play with his toes without any feeling that they belong to him more than the rattle by his side; and it is only by degrees, through pain, that he understands the fact of the body. And experiences of the same kind are necessary for the individual to become conscious of himself; but here there is the difference that, although everyone becomes equally conscious of his body as a separate and complete organism, everyone does not become equally conscious of himself as a complete and separate personality. The feeling of apartness from others comes to most with puberty, but it is not always developed to such a degree as to make the difference between the individual and his fellows noticeable to the individual. It is such as he, as little conscious of himself as the bee in a hive, who are the lucky in life, for they have the best chance of happiness: their activities are shared by all, and their pleasures are only pleasures because they are enjoyed in common; you will see them on Whit-Monday dancing on Hampstead Heath, shouting at a football match, or from club windows in Pall Mall cheering a royal procession. It is because of them that man has been called a social animal.

Philip passed from the innocence of childhood to bitter consciousness of himself by the ridicule which his club-foot had excited. The circumstances of his case were so peculiar that he could not apply to them the ready-made rules which acted well enough in ordinary affairs, and he was forced to think for himself. The many books he had read filled his mind with ideas which, because he only half understood them, gave more scope to his imagination. Beneath his painful shyness something was growing up within him, and obscurely he realised his personality. But at times it gave him odd surprises; he did things, he knew not why, and afterwards when he thought of them found himself all at sea.

There was a boy called Luard between whom and Philip a friendship had arisen, and one day, when they were playing together in the school-room, Luard began to perform some trick with an ebony pen-holder of Philip's.

"Don't play the giddy ox," said Philip. "You'll only break it."

"I shan't."

But no sooner were the words out of the boy's mouth than the pen-holder snapped in two. Luard looked at Philip with dismay.

"Oh, I say, I'm awfully sorry."

The tears rolled down Philip's cheeks, but he did not answer.

"I say, what's the matter?" said Luard, with surprise. "I'll get you another one exactly the same."

"It's not about the pen-holder I care," said Philip, in a trembling voice, "only it was given me by my mater, just before she died."

"I say, I'm awfully sorry, Carey."

"It doesn't matter. It wasn't your fault."

Philip took the two pieces of the pen-holder and looked at them. He tried to restrain his sobs. He felt utterly miserable. And yet he could not tell why, for he knew quite well that he had bought the pen-holder during his last holidays at Blackstable for one and twopence. He did not know in the least what had made him invent that pathetic story, but he was quite as unhappy as though it had been true. The pious atmosphere of the vicarage and the religious tone of the school had made Philip's conscience very sensitive; he absorbed insensibly the feeling about him that the Tempter was ever on the watch to gain his immortal soul; and though he was not more truthful than most boys he never told a lie without suffering from remorse. When he thought over this incident he was very much distressed, and made up his mind that he

must go to Luard and tell him that the story was an invention. Though he dreaded humiliation more than anything in the world, he hugged himself for two or three days at the thought of the agonising joy of humiliating himself to the Glory of God. But he never got any further. He satisfied his conscience by the more comfortable method of expressing his repentance only to the Almighty. But he could not understand why he should have been so genuinely affected by the story he was making up. The tears that flowed down his grubby cheeks were real tears. Then by some accident of association there occurred to him that scene when Emma had told him of his mother's death, and, though he could not speak for crying, he had insisted on going in to say good-bye to the Misses Watkin so that they might see his grief and pity him.

XIV

THEN a wave of religiosity passed through the school. Bad language was no longer heard, and the little nastinesses of small boys were looked upon with hostility; the bigger boys, like the lords temporal of the Middle Ages, used the strength of their arms to persuade those weaker than themselves to virtuous courses.

Philip, his restless mind avid for new things, became very devout. He heard soon that it was possible to join a Bible League, and wrote to London for particulars. These consisted in a form to be filled up with the applicant's name, age, and school; a solemn declaration to be signed that he would read a set portion of Holy Scripture every night for a year; and a request for half a crown; this, it was explained, was demanded partly to prove the earnestness of the applicant's desire to become a member of the League, and partly to cover clerical expenses. Philip duly sent the papers and the money, and in return received a calendar worth about a penny, on which was set down the appointed passage to be read each day, and a sheet of paper on one side of which was a picture of the Good Shepherd and a lamb, and on the other, decoratively framed in red lines, a short prayer which had to be said before beginning to read.

Every evening he undressed as quickly as possible in order to have time for his task before the gas was put out. He read industriously, as he read always, without criticism, stories of cruelty, deceit, ingratitude, dishonesty, and low cunning. Actions which would have excited his horror in the life about him, in the reading passed through his mind without comment, because they were committed under the direct inspiration of God. The method of the League was to alternate a book of the Old Testament with a book of the New, and one night Philip came across these words of Jesus Christ:

If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig-tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done.

And all this, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.

They made no particular impression on him, but it happened that two or three days later, being Sunday, the Canon in residence

chose them for the text of his sermon. Even if Philip had wanted to hear this it would have been impossible, for the boys of King's School sit in the choir, and the pulpit stands at the corner of the transept so that the preacher's back is almost turned to them. The distance also is so great that it needs a man with a fine voice and a knowledge of elocution to make himself heard in the choir; and according to long usage the Canons of Tercanbury are chosen for their learning rather than for any qualities which might be of use in a cathedral church. But the words of the text, perhaps because he had read them so short a while before, came clearly enough to Philip's ears, and they seemed on a sudden to have a personal application. He thought about them through most of the sermon, and that night, on getting into bed, he turned over the pages of the Gospel and found once more the passage. Though he believed implicitly everything he saw in print, he had learned already that in the Bible things that said one thing quite clearly often mysteriously meant another. There was no one he liked to ask at school, so he kept the question he had in mind till the Christmas holidays, and then one day he made an opportunity. It was after supper and prayers were just finished. Mrs. Carey was counting the eggs that Mary Ann had brought in as usual and writing on each one the date. Philip stood at the table and pretended to turn listlessly the pages of the Bible.

"I say, Uncle William, this passage here, does it really mean that?"

He put his finger against it as though he had come across it accidentally.

Mr. Carey looked up over his spectacles. He was holding *The Blackstable Times* in front of the fire. It had come in that evening damp from the press, and the Vicar always aired it for ten minutes before he began to read.

"What passage is that?" he asked.

"Why, this about if you have faith you can remove mountains."

"If it says so in the Bible it is so, Philip," said Mrs. Carey gently, taking up the plate-basket.

Philip looked at his uncle for an answer.

"It's a matter of faith."

"D'you mean to say that if you really believed you could move mountains you could?"

"By the grace of God," said the Vicar.

"Now, say good-night to your uncle, Philip," said Aunt Louisa. "You're not wanting to move a mountain tonight, are you?"

Philip allowed himself to be kissed on the forehead by his

uncle and preceded Mrs. Carey upstairs. He had got the information he wanted. His little room was icy, and he shivered when he put on his nightgown. But he always felt that his prayers were more pleasing to God when he said them under conditions of discomfort. The coldness of his hands and feet were an offering to the Almighty. And tonight he sank on his knees, buried his face in his hands, and prayed to God with all his might that He would make his club-foot whole. It was a very small thing beside the moving of mountains. He knew that God could do it if He wished, and his own faith was complete. Next morning, finishing his prayers with the same request, he fixed a date for the miracle.

"Oh, God, in Thy loving mercy and goodness, if it be Thy will, please make my foot all right on the night before I go back to school."

He was glad to get his petition into a formula, and he repeated it later in the dining-room during the short pause which the Vicar always made after prayers, before he rose from his knees. He said it again in the evening and again, shivering in his nightshirt, before he got into bed. And he believed. For once he looked forward with eagerness to the end of the holidays. He laughed to himself as he thought of his uncle's astonishment when he ran down the stairs three at a time; and after breakfast he and Aunt Louisa would have to hurry out and buy a new pair of boots. At school they would be astounded.

"Hulloa, Carey, what have you done with your foot?"

"Oh, it's all right now," he would answer casually, as though it were the most natural thing in the world.

He would be able to play football. His heart leaped as he saw himself running, running, faster than any of the other boys. At the end of the Easter term there were the sports, and he would be able to go in for the races; he rather fancied himself over the hurdles. It would be splendid to be like everyone else, not to be stared at curiously by new boys who did not know about his deformity, nor at the baths in summer to need incredible precautions, while he was undressing, before he could hide his foot in the water.

He prayed with all the power of his soul. No doubts assailed him. He was confident in the word of God. And the night before he was to go back to school he went up to bed tremulous with excitement. There was snow on the ground, and Aunt Louisa had allowed herself the unaccustomed luxury of a fire in her bed-room; but in Philip's little room it was so cold that his

fingers were numb, and he had great difficulty in undoing his collar. His teeth chattered. The idea came to him that he must do something more than usual to attract the attention of God, and he turned back the rug which was in front of his bed so that he could kneel on the bare boards; and then it struck him that his nightshirt was a softness that might displease his Maker, so he took it off and said his prayers naked. When he got into bed he was so cold that for some time he could not sleep, but when he did, it was so soundly that Mary Ann had to shake him when she brought in his hot water next morning. She talked to him while she drew the curtains, but he did not answer; he had remembered at once that this was the morning for the miracle. His heart was filled with joy and gratitude. His first instinct was to put down his hand and feel the foot which was whole now, but to do this seemed to doubt the goodness of God. He knew that his foot was well. But at last he made up his mind, and with the toes of his right foot he just touched his left. Then he passed his hand over it.

He limped downstairs just as Mary Ann was going into the dining-room for prayers, and then he sat down to breakfast.

"You're very quiet this morning, Philip," said Aunt Louisa presently.

"He's thinking of the good breakfast he'll have at school tomorrow," said the Vicar.

When Philip answered, it was in a way that always irritated his uncle, with something that had nothing to do with the matter in hand. He called it a bad habit of wool-gathering.

"Supposing you'd asked God to do something," said Philip, "and really believed it was going to happen, like moving a mountain, I mean, and you had faith, and it didn't happen, what would it mean?"

"What a funny boy you are!" said Aunt Louisa. "You asked about moving mountains two or three weeks ago."

"It would just mean that you hadn't got faith," answered Uncle William.

Philip accepted the explanation. If God had not cured him, it was because he did not really believe. And yet he did not see how he could believe more than he did. But perhaps he had not given God enough time. He had only asked Him for nineteen days. In a day or two he began his prayer again, and this time he fixed upon Easter. That was the day of His Son's glorious resurrection, and God in His happiness might be mercifully inclined. But now Philip added other means of attaining his desire: he

began to wish, when he saw a new moon or a dappled horse, and he looked out for shooting stars; during exeat they had a chicken at the vicarage, and he broke the lucky bone with Aunt Louisa and wished again, each time that his foot might be made whole. He was appealing unconsciously to gods older to his race than the God of Israel. And he bombarded the Almighty with his prayer, at odd times of the day, whenever it occurred to him, in identical words always, for it seemed to him important to make his request in the same terms. But presently the feeling came to him that this time also his faith would not be great enough. He could not resist the doubt that assailed him. He made his own experience into a general rule.

"I suppose no one ever has faith enough," he said.

It was like the salt which his nurse used to tell him about: you could catch any bird by putting salt on his tail; and once he had taken a little bag of it into Kensington Gardens. But he could never get near enough to put the salt on a bird's tail. Before Easter he had given up the struggle. He felt a dull resentment against his uncle for taking him in. The text which spoke of the moving of mountains was just one of those that said one thing and meant another. He thought his uncle had been playing a practical joke on him.

XV

The King's School at Tercanbury, to which Philip went when he was thirteen, prided itself on its antiquity. It traced its origin to an abbey school, founded before the Conquest, where the rudiments of learning were taught by Augustine monks; and, like many another establishment of this sort, on the destruction of the monasteries it had been reorganised by the officers of King Henry VIII and thus acquired its name. Since then, pursuing its modest course, it had given to the sons of the local gentry and of the professional people of Kent an education sufficient to their needs. One or two men of letters, beginning with a poet, than whom only Shakespeare had a more splendid genius, and ending with a writer of prose whose view of life has affected profoundly the generation of which Philip was a member, had gone forth from its gates to achieve fame; it had produced one or two eminent lawyers, but eminent lawyers are common, and one or two soldiers of distinction; but during the three centuries since its separation from the monastic order it had trained especially men of the church, bishops, deans, canons, and above all country clergymen: there were boys in the school whose fathers, grandfathers, great-grandfathers, had been educated there and had all been rectors of parishes in the diocese of Tercanbury; and they came to it with their minds made up already to be ordained. But there were signs notwithstanding that even there changes were coming; for a few, repeating what they had heard at home, said that the Church was no longer what it used to be. It wasn't so much the money; but the class of people who went in for it weren't the same; and two or three boys knew curates whose fathers were tradesmen: they'd rather go out to the Colonies (in those days the Colonies were still the last hope of those who could get nothing to do in England) than be a curate under some chap who wasn't a gentleman. At King's School, as at Blackstable Vicarage, a tradesman was anyone who was not lucky enough to own land (and here a fine distinction was made between the gentleman farmer and the landowner), or did not follow one of the four professions to which it was possible for a gentleman to belong. Among the day-boys, of whom there were about a hundred and fifty, sons of the local gentry and of the men stationed at the

dépôt, those whose fathers were engaged in business were made to feel the degradation of their state.

The masters had no patience with modern ideas of education, which they read of sometimes in *The Times* or *The Guardian*, and hoped fervently that King's School would remain true to its old traditions. The dead languages were taught with such thoroughness that an old boy seldom thought of Homer or Virgil in after life without a qualm of boredom; and though in the common room at dinner one or two bolder spirits suggested that mathematics were of increasing importance, the general feeling was that they were a less noble study than the classics. Neither German nor chemistry was taught, and French only by the form-masters; they could keep order better than a foreigner, and, since they knew the grammar as well as any Frenchman, it seemed unimportant that none of them could have got a cup of coffee in the restaurant at Boulogne unless the waiter had known a little English. Geography was taught chiefly by making boys draw maps, and this was a favourite occupation, especially when the country dealt with was mountainous: it was possible to waste a great deal of time in drawing the Andes or the Apennines. The masters, graduates of Oxford or Cambridge, were ordained and unmarried; if by chance they wished to marry they could only do so by accepting one of the smaller livings at the disposal of the Chapter; but for many years none of them had cared to leave the refined society of Tercanbury, which owing to the cavalry dépôt had a martial as well as an ecclesiastical tone, for the monotony of life in a country rectory; and they were now all men of middle age.

The headmaster, on the other hand, was obliged to be married, and he conducted the school till age began to tell upon him. When he retired he was rewarded with a much better living than any of the under-masters could hope for, and an honorary Canonry.

But a year before Philip entered the school a great change had come over it. It had been obvious for some time that Dr. Fleming, who had been headmaster for the quarter of a century, was become too deaf to continue his work to the greater glory of God; and when one of the livings on the outskirts of the city fell vacant, with a stipend of six hundred a year, the Chapter offered it to him in such a manner as to imply that they thought it high time for him to retire. He could nurse his ailments comfortably on such an income. Two or three curates who had hoped for preferment told their wives it was scandalous to give a parish that needed a young, strong, and energetic man to an

old fellow who knew nothing of parochial work, and had feathered his nest already; but the mutterings of the unbeneficed clergy do not reach the ears of a cathedral Chapter. And as for the parishioners they had nothing to say in the matter, and therefore nobody asked for their opinion. The Wesleyans and the Baptists both had chapels in the village.

When Dr. Fleming was thus disposed of it became necessary to find a successor. It was contrary to the traditions of the school that one of the lower-masters should be chosen. The common-room was unanimous in desiring the election of Mr. Watson, headmaster of the preparatory school; he could hardly be described as already a master of King's School, they had all known him for twenty years, and there was no danger that he would make a nuisance of himself. But the Chapter sprang a surprise on them. It chose a man called Perkins. At first nobody knew who Perkins was, and the name favourably impressed no one; but before the shock of it had passed away, it was realised that Perkins was the son of Perkins the linendraper. Dr. Fleming informed the masters just before dinner, and his manner showed his consternation. Such of them as were dining in, ate their meal almost in silence, and no reference was made to the matter till the servants had left the room. Then they set to. The names of those present on this occasion are unimportant, but they had been known to generations of school-boys as Sighs, Tar, Winks, Squirts, and Pat.

They all knew Tom Perkins. The first thing about him was that he was not a gentleman. They remembered him quite well. He was a small, dark boy, with untidy black hair and large eyes. He looked like a gipsy. He had come to the school as a day-boy, with the best scholarship on their endowment, so that his education had cost him nothing. Of course he was brilliant. At every Speech-Day he was loaded with prizes. He was their show-boy, and they remembered now bitterly their fear that he would try to get some scholarship at one of the larger public schools and so pass out of their hands. Dr. Fleming had gone to the linendraper his father—they all remembered the shop, Perkins and Cooper, in St. Catherine's Street—and said he hoped Tom would remain with them till he went to Oxford. The school was Perkins and Cooper's best customer, and Mr. Perkins was only too glad to give the required assurance. Tom Perkins continued to triumph, he was the finest classical scholar that Dr. Fleming remembered, and on leaving the school took with him the most valuable scholarship they had to offer. He got another at Magdalen and

settled down to a brilliant career at the University. The school magazine recorded the distinctions he achieved year after year, and when he got his double first Dr. Fleming himself wrote a few words of eulogy on the front page. It was with greater satisfaction that they welcomed his success, since Perkins and Cooper had fallen upon evil days: Cooper drank like a fish, and just before Tom Perkins took his degree the linendrapers filed their petition in bankruptcy.

In due course Tom Perkins took Holy Orders and entered upon the profession for which he was so admirably suited. He had been an assistant master at Wellington and then at Rugby.

But there was quite a difference between welcoming his success at other schools and serving under his leadership in their own. Tar had frequently given him lines, and Squirts had boxed his ears. They could not imagine how the Chapter had made such a mistake. No one could be expected to forget that he was the son of a bankrupt linendraper, and the alcoholism of Cooper seemed to increase the disgrace. It was understood that the Dean had supported his candidature with zeal, so the Dean would probably ask him to dinner; but would the pleasant little dinners in the precincts ever be the same when Tom Perkins sat at the table? And what about the dépôt? He really could not expect officers and gentlemen to receive him as one of themselves. It would do the school incalculable harm. Parents would be dissatisfied, and no one could be surprised if there were wholesale withdrawals. And then the indignity of calling him Mr. Perkins! The masters thought by way of protest of sending in their resignations in a body, but the uneasy fear that they would be accepted with equanimity restrained them.

"The only thing is to prepare ourselves for changes," said Sighs, who had conducted the fifth form for five and twenty years with unparalleled incompetence.

And when they saw him they were not reassured. Dr. Fleming invited them to meet him at luncheon. He was now a man of thirty-two, tall and lean, but with the same wild and unkempt look they remembered on him as a boy. His clothes, ill-made and shabby, were put on untidily. His hair was as black and as long as ever, and he had plainly never learned to brush it; it fell over his forehead with every gesture, and he had a quick movement of the hand with which he pushed it back from his eyes. He had a black moustache and a beard which came high up on his face almost to the cheek-bones. He talked to the masters quite easily, as though he had parted from them a week or two be-

fore; he was evidently delighted to see them. He seemed unconscious of the strangeness of the position and appeared not to notice any oddness in being addressed as Mr. Perkins.

When he bade them good-bye, one of the masters, for something to say, remarked that he was allowing himself plenty of time to catch his train.

"I want to go round and have a look at the shop," he answered cheerfully.

There was a distinct embarrassment. They wondered that he could be so tactless, and to make it worse Dr. Fleming had not heard what he said. His wife shouted it in his ear.

"He wants to go round and look at his father's old shop."

Only Tom Perkins was unconscious of the humiliation which the whole party felt. He turned to Mrs. Fleming.

"Who's got it now, d'you know?"

She could hardly answer. She was very angry.

"It's still a linendraper's," she said bitterly. "Grove is the name. We don't deal there any more."

"I wonder if he'd let me go over the house."

"I expect he would if you explain who you are."

It was not till the end of dinner that evening that any reference was made in the common-room to the subject that was in all their minds. Then it was Sighs who asked:

"Well, what did you think of our new head?"

They thought of the conversation at luncheon. It was hardly a conversation; it was a monologue. Perkins had talked incessantly. He talked very quickly, with a flow of easy words and in a deep, resonant voice. He had a short, odd little laugh which showed his white teeth. They had followed him with difficulty, for his mind darted from subject to subject with a connection they did not always catch. He talked of pedagogics, and this was natural enough; but he had much to say of modern theories in Germany which they had never heard of and received with misgiving. He talked of the classics, but he had been to Greece, and he discoursed of archæology; he had once spent a winter digging; they could not see how that helped a man to teach boys to pass examinations. He talked of politics. It sounded odd to them to hear him compare Lord Beaconsfield with Alcibiades. He talked of Mr. Gladstone and Home Rule. They realised that he was a Liberal. Their hearts sank. He talked of German philosophy and of French fiction. They could not think a man profound whose interests were so diverse.

It was Winks who summed up the general impression and put

it into a form they all felt conclusively damning. Winks was the master of the upper third, a weak-kneed man with drooping eyelids. He was too tall for his strength, and his movements were slow and languid. He gave an impression of lassitude, and his nickname was eminently appropriate.

"He's very enthusiastic," said Winks.

Enthusiasm was ill-bred. Enthusiasm was ungentlemanly. They thought of the Salvation Army with its braying trumpets and its drums. Enthusiasm meant change. They had goose-flesh when they thought of all the pleasant old habits which stood in imminent danger. They hardly dared to look forward to the future.

"He looks more of a gipsy than ever," said one, after a pause.

"I wonder if the Dean and Chapter knew that he was a Radical when they elected him," another observed bitterly.

But conversation halted. They were too much disturbed for words.

When Tar and Sighs were walking together to the Chapter House on Speech-Day a week later, Tar, who had a bitter tongue, remarked to his colleague:

"Well, we've seen a good many Speech-Days here, haven't we? I wonder if we shall see another."

Sighs was more melancholy even than usual.

"If anything worth having comes along in the way of a living I don't mind when I retire."

XVI

A YEAR passed, and when Philip came to the school the old masters were all in their places; but a good many changes had taken place notwithstanding their stubborn resistance, none the less formidable because it was concealed under an apparent desire to fall in with the new head's ideas. Though the form-masters still taught French to the lower school, another master had come, with a degree of doctor of philology from the University of Heidelberg and a record of three years spent in a French lycée, to teach French to the upper forms and German to anyone who cared to take it up instead of Greek. Another master was engaged to teach mathematics more systematically than had been found necessary hitherto. Neither of these was ordained. This was a real revolution, and when the pair arrived the older masters received them with distrust. A laboratory had been fitted up, army classes were instituted; they all said the character of the school was changing. And heaven only knew what further projects Mr. Perkins turned in that untidy head of his. The school was small as public schools go, there were not more than two hundred boarders; and it was difficult for it to grow larger, for it was huddled up against the Cathedral; the precincts, with the exception of a house in which some of the masters lodged, were occupied by the cathedral clergy; and there was no more room for building. But Mr. Perkins devised an elaborate scheme by which he might obtain sufficient space to make the school double its present size. He wanted to attract boys from London. He thought it would be good for them to be thrown in contact with the Kentish lads, and it would sharpen the country wits of these.

"It's against all our traditions," said Sighs, when Mr. Perkins made the suggestion to him. "We've rather gone out of our way to avoid the contamination of boys from London."

"Oh, what nonsense!" said Mr. Perkins.

No one had ever told the form-master before that he talked nonsense, and he was meditating an acid reply, in which perhaps he might insert a veiled reference to hosiery, when Mr. Perkins in his impetuous way attacked him outrageously.

"That house in the Precincts—if you'd only marry I'd get the Chapter to put another couple of stories on, and we'd make dormitories and studies, and your wife could help you."

The elderly clergyman gasped. Why should he marry? He was fifty-seven, a man couldn't marry at fifty-seven. He couldn't start looking after a house at his time of life. He didn't want to marry. If the choice lay between that and the country living he would much sooner resign. All he wanted now was peace and quietness.

"I'm not thinking of marrying," he said.

Mr. Perkins looked at him with his dark, bright eyes, and if there was a twinkle in them poor Sighs never saw it.

"What a pity! Couldn't you marry to oblige me? It would help me a great deal with the Dean and Chapter when I suggest rebuilding your house."

But Mr. Perkins' most unpopular innovation was his system of taking occasionally another man's form. He asked it as a favour, but after all it was a favour which could not be refused, and as Tar, otherwise Mr. Turner, said, it was undignified for all parties. He gave no warning, but after morning prayers would say to one of the masters:

"I wonder if you'd mind taking the Sixth today at eleven. We'll change over, shall we?"

They did not know whether this was usual at other schools, but certainly it had never been done at Tercanbury. The results were curious. Mr. Turner, who was the first victim, broke the news to his form that the headmaster would take them for Latin that day, and on the pretence that they might like to ask him a question or two so that they should not make perfect fools of themselves, spent the last quarter of an hour of the history lesson in construing for them the passage of Livy which had been set for the day; but when he rejoined his class and looked at the paper on which Mr. Perkins had written the marks, a surprise awaited him; for the two boys at the top of the form seemed to have done very ill, while others who had never distinguished themselves before were given full marks. When he asked Eldridge, his cleverest boy, what was the meaning of this the answer came sullenly:

"Mr. Perkins never gave us any construing to do. He asked me what I knew about General Gordon."

Mr. Turner looked at him in astonishment. The boys evidently felt they had been hardly used, and he could not help agreeing with their silent dissatisfaction. He could not see either what General Gordon had to do with Livy. He hazarded an enquiry afterwards.

"Eldridge was dreadfully put out because you asked him what

he knew about General Gordon," he said to the headmaster, with an attempt at a chuckle.

Mr. Perkins laughed.

"I saw they'd got to the agrarian laws of Caius Gracchus, and I wondered if they knew anything about the agrarian troubles in Ireland. But all they knew about Ireland was that Dublin was on the Liffey. So I wondered if they'd ever heard of General Gordon."

Then the horrid fact was disclosed that the new head had a mania for general information. He had doubts about the utility of examinations on subjects which had been crammed for the occasion. He wanted common sense.

Sighs grew more worried every month; he could not get the thought out of his head that Mr. Perkins would ask him to fix a day for his marriage; and he hated the attitude the head adopted towards classical literature. There was no doubt that he was a fine scholar, and he was engaged on a work which was quite in the right tradition: he was writing a treatise on the trees in Latin literature; but he talked of it flippantly, as though it were a pastime of no great importance, like billiards, which engaged his leisure but was not to be considered with seriousness. And Squirts, the master of the middle-third, grew more ill-tempered every day.

It was in his form that Philip was put on entering the school. The Rev. B. B. Gordon was a man by nature ill-suited to be a schoolmaster: he was impatient and choleric. With no one to call him to account, with only small boys to face him, he had long lost all power of self-control. He began his work in a rage and ended it in a passion. He was a man of middle height and of a corpulent figure; he had sandy hair, worn very short and now growing gray, and a small bristly moustache. His large face, with indistinct features and small blue eyes, was naturally red, but during his frequent attacks of anger it grew dark and purple. His nails were bitten to the quick, for while some trembling boy was construing he would sit at his desk shaking with the fury that consumed him, and gnaw his fingers. Stories, perhaps exaggerated, were told of his violence, and two years before there had been some excitement in the school when it was heard that one father was threatening a prosecution: he had boxed the ears of a boy named Walters with a book so violently that his hearing was affected and the boy had to be taken away from the school. The boy's father lived in Tercanbury, and there had been much indignation in the city, the local paper had referred to the matter: but Mr. Walters was only a brewer, so the sympathy was divided. The rest of the boys, for reasons best known to themselves, though

they loathed the master, took his side in the affair, and, to show their indignation that the school's business had been dealt with outside, made things as uncomfortable as they could for Walters' younger brother, who still remained. But Mr. Gordon had only escaped the country living by the skin of his teeth, and he had never hit a boy since. The right the masters possessed to cane boys on the hand was taken away from them, and Squirts could no longer emphasize his anger by beating his desk with the cane. He never did more now than take a boy by the shoulders and shake him. He still made a naughty or refractory lad stand with one arm stretched out for anything from ten minutes to half an hour, and he was as violent as before with his tongue.

No master could have been more unfitted to teach things to so shy a boy as Philip. He had come to the school with fewer terrors than he had when first he went to Mr. Watson's. He knew a good many boys who had been with him at the preparatory school. He felt more grown-up, and instinctively realised that among the larger numbers his deformity would be less noticeable. But from the first day Mr. Gordon struck terror in his heart; and the master, quick to discern the boys who were frightened of him, seemed on that account to take a peculiar dislike to him. Philip had enjoyed his work, but now he began to look upon the hours passed in school with horror. Rather than risk an answer which might be wrong and excite a storm of abuse from the master, he would sit stupidly silent, and when it came towards his turn to stand up and construe he grew sick and white with apprehension. His happy moments were those when Mr. Perkins took the form. He was able to gratify the passion for general knowledge which beset the headmaster; he had read all sorts of strange books beyond his years, and often Mr. Perkins, when a question was going round the room, would stop at Philip with a smile that filled the boy with rapture, and say:

"Now, Carey, you tell them."

The good marks he got on these occasions increased Mr. Gordon's indignation. One day it came to Philip's turn to translate, and the master sat there glaring at him and furiously biting his thumb. He was in a ferocious mood. Philip began to speak in a low voice.

"Don't mumble," shouted the master.

Something seemed to stick in Philip's throat.

"Go on. Go on. Go on."

Each time the words were screamed more loudly. The effect was to drive all he knew out of Philip's head, and he looked

at the printed page vacantly. Mr. Gordon began to breathe heavily.

"If you don't know why don't you say so? Do you know it or not? Did you hear all this construed last time or not? Why don't you speak? Speak, you blockhead, speak!"

The master seized the arms of his chair and grasped them as though to prevent himself from falling upon Philip. They knew that in past days he often used to seize boys by the throat till they almost choked. The veins in his forehead stood out and his face grew dark and threatening. He was a man insane.

Philip had known the passage perfectly the day before, but now he could remember nothing.

"I don't know it," he gasped.

"Why don't you know it? Let's take the words one by one. We'll soon see if you don't know it."

Philip stood silent, very white, trembling a little, with his head bent down on the book. The master's breathing grew almost stertorous.

"The headmaster says you're clever. I don't know how he sees it. General information." He laughed savagely. "I don't know what they put you in this form for. Blockhead."

He was pleased with the word, and he repeated it at the top of his voice.

"Blockhead! Blockhead! Club-footed blockhead!"

That relieved him a little. He saw Philip redden suddenly. He told him to fetch the Black Book. Philip put down his Cæsar and went silently out. The Black Book was a sombre volume in which the names of boys were written with their misdeeds, and when a name was down three times it meant a caning. Philip went to the headmaster's house and knocked at his study-door. Mr. Perkins was seated at his table.

"May I have the Black Book, please, sir."

"There it is," answered Mr. Perkins, indicating its place by a nod of his head. "What have you been doing that you shouldn't?"

"I don't know, sir."

Mr. Perkins gave him a quick look, but without answering went on with his work. Philip took the book and went out. When the hour was up, a few minutes later, he brought it back.

"Let me have a look at it," said the headmaster. "I see Mr. Gordon has black-booked you for 'gross impertinence.' What was it?"

"I don't know, sir. Mr. Gordon said I was a club-footed blockhead."

Mr. Perkins looked at him again. He wondered whether there was sarcasm behind the boy's reply, but he was still much too shaken. His face was white and his eyes had a look of terrified distress. Mr. Perkins got up and put the book down. As he did so he took up some photographs.

"A friend of mine sent me some pictures of Athens this morning," he said casually. "Look here, there's the Akropolis."

He began explaining to Philip what he saw. The ruin grew vivid with his words. He showed him the theatre of Dionysus and explained in what order the people sat, and how beyond they could see the blue Aegean. And then suddenly he said:

"I remember Mr. Gordon used to call me a gipsy counter-jumper when I was in his form."

And before Philip, his mind fixed on the photographs, had time to gather the meaning of the remark, Mr. Perkins was showing him a picture of Salamis, and with his finger, a finger of which the nail had a little black edge to it, was pointing out how the Greek ships were placed and how the Persian.

XVII

Philip passed the next two years with comfortable monotony. He was not bullied more than other boys of his size; and his deformity, withdrawing him from games, acquired for him an insignificance for which he was grateful. He was not popular, and he was very lonely. He spent a couple of terms with Winks in the Upper Third. Winks, with his weary manner and his drooping eyelids, looked infinitely bored. He did his duty, but he did it with an abstracted mind. He was kind, gentle, and foolish. He had a great belief in the honour of boys; he felt that the first thing to make them truthful was not to let it enter your head for a moment that it was possible for them to lie. "Ask much," he quoted, "and much shall be given to you." Life was easy in the Upper Third. You knew exactly what lines would come to your turn to construe, and with the crib that passed from hand to hand you could find out all you wanted in two minutes; you could hold a Latin Grammar open on your knees while questions were passing round; and Winks never noticed anything odd in the fact that the same incredible mistake was to be found in a dozen different exercises. He had no great faith in examinations, for he noticed that boys never did so well in them as in form: it was disappointing, but not significant. In due course they were moved up, having learned little but a cheerful effrontery in the distortion of truth, which was possibly of greater service to them in after life than an ability to read Latin at sight.

Then they fell into the hands of Tar. His name was Turner; he was the most vivacious of the old masters, a short man with an immense belly, a black beard turning now to gray, and a swarthy skin. In his clerical dress there was indeed something in him to suggest the tar-barrel; and though on principle he gave five hundred lines to any boy on whose lips he overheard his nickname, at dinner-parties in the precincts he often made little jokes about it. He was the most worldly of the masters; he dined out more frequently than any of the others, and the society he kept was not so exclusively clerical. The boys looked upon him as rather a dog. He left off his clerical attire during the holidays and had been seen in Switzerland in gay tweeds. He liked a bottle of wine and a good dinner, and having once been

seen at the Café Royal with a lady who was very probably a near relation, was thenceforward supposed by generations of school-boys to indulge in orgies the circumstantial details of which pointed to an unbounded belief in human depravity.

Mr. Turner reckoned that it took him a term to lick boys into shape after they had been in the Upper Third; and now and then he let fall a sly hint, which showed that he knew perfectly what went on in his colleague's form. He took it good-humouredly. He looked upon boys as young ruffians who were more apt to be truthful if it was quite certain a lie would be found out, whose sense of honour was peculiar to themselves and did not apply to dealings with masters, and who were least likely to be troublesome when they learned that it did not pay. He was proud of his form and as eager at fifty-five that it should do better in examinations than any of the others as he had been when he first came to the school. He had the choler of the obese, easily roused and as easily calmed, and his boys soon discovered that there was much kindliness beneath the invective with which he constantly assailed them. He had no patience with fools, but was willing to take much trouble with boys whom he suspected of concealing intelligence behind their wilfulness. He was fond of inviting them to tea; and, though vowing they never got a look in with him at the cakes and muffins, for it was the fashion to believe that his corpulence pointed to a voracious appetite, and his voracious appetite to tape-worms, they accepted his invitations with real pleasure.

Philip was now more comfortable, for space was so limited that there were only studies for boys in the upper school, and till then he had lived in the great hall in which they all ate and in which the lower forms did preparation in a promiscuity which was vaguely distasteful to him. Now and then it made him restless to be with people and he wanted urgently to be alone. He set out for solitary walks into the country. There was a little stream, with pollards on both sides of it, that ran through green fields, and it made him happy, he knew not why, to wander along its banks. When he was tired he lay face-downward on the grass and watched the eager scurrying of minnows and of tadpoles. It gave him a peculiar satisfaction to saunter round the precincts. On the green in the middle they practised at nets in the summer, but during the rest of the year it was quiet: boys used to wander round sometimes arm in arm, or a studious fellow with abstracted gaze walked slowly, repeating to himself something he had to learn by heart. There was a colony of rooks in the great

elms, and they filled the air with melancholy cries. Along one side lay the Cathedral with its great central tower, and Philip, who knew as yet nothing of beauty, felt when he looked at it a troubling delight which he could not understand. When he had a study (it was a little square room looking on a slum, and four boys shared it), he bought a photograph of that view of the Cathedral, and pinned it up over his desk. And he found himself taking a new interest in what he saw from the window of the Fourth Form room. It looked on to old lawns, carefully tended, and fine trees with foliage dense and rich. It gave him an odd feeling in his heart, and he did not know if it was pain or pleasure. It was the first dawn of the æsthetic emotion. It accompanied other changes. His voice broke, It was no longer quite under his control, and queer sounds issued from his throat.

Then he began to go to the classes which were held in the headmaster's study, immediately after tea, to prepare boys for confirmation. Philip's piety had not stood the test of time, and he had long since given up his nightly reading of the Bible; but now, under the influence of Mr. Perkins, with this new condition of the body which made him so restless, his old feelings revived, and he reproached himself bitterly for his backsliding. The fires of Hell burned fiercely before his mind's eye. If he had died during that time when he was little better than an infidel he would have been lost; he believed implicitly in pain everlasting, he believed in it much more than in eternal happiness; and he shuddered at the dangers he had run.

Since the day on which Mr. Perkins had spoken kindly to him, when he was smarting under the particular form of abuse which he could least bear, Philip had conceived for his headmaster a dog-like adoration. He racked his brains vainly for some way to please him. He treasured the smallest word of commendation which by chance fell from his lips. And when he came to the quiet little meetings in his house he was prepared to surrender himself entirely. He kept his eyes fixed on Mr. Perkins' shining eyes, and sat with mouth half open, his head a little thrown forward so as to miss no word. The ordinariness of the surroundings made the matters they dealt with extraordinarily moving. And often the master, seized himself by the wonder of his subject, would push back the book in front of him, and with his hands clasped together over his heart, as though to still the beating, would talk of the mysteries of their religion. Sometimes Philip did not understand, but he did not want to understand, he felt vaguely that it was enough to feel. It seemed to him then that

the headmaster, with his black, straggling hair and his pale face, was like those prophets of Israel who feared not to take kings to task; and when he thought of the Redeemer he saw Him only with the same dark eyes and those wan cheeks.

Mr. Perkins took this part of his work with great seriousness. There was never here any of that flashing humour which made the other masters suspect him of flippancy. Finding time for everything in his busy day, he was able at certain intervals to take separately for a quarter of an hour or twenty minutes the boys whom he was preparing for confirmation. He wanted to make them feel that this was the first consciously serious step in their lives; he tried to grope into the depths of their souls; he wanted to instil in them his own vehement devotion. In Philip, notwithstanding his shyness, he felt the possibility of a passion equal to his own. The boy's temperament seemed to him essentially religious. One day he broke off suddenly from the subject on which he had been talking.

"Have you thought at all what you're going to be when you grow up?" he asked.

"My uncle wants me to be ordained," said Philip.

"And you?"

Philip looked away. He was ashamed to answer that he felt himself unworthy.

"I don't know any life that's so full of happiness as ours. I wish I could make you feel what a wonderful privilege it is. One can serve God in every walk, but we stand nearer to Him. I don't want to influence you, but if you made up your mind—oh, at once—you couldn't help feeling that joy and relief which never desert one again."

Philip did not answer, but the headmaster read in his eyes that he realised already something of what he tried to indicate.

"If you go on as you are now you'll find yourself head of the school one of these days, and you ought to be pretty safe for a scholarship when you leave. Have you got anything of your own?"

"My uncle says I shall have a hundred a year when I'm twenty-one."

"You'll be rich. I had nothing."

The headmaster hesitated a moment, and then, idly drawing lines with a pencil on the blotting paper in front of him, went on.

"I'm afraid your choice of professions will be rather limited. You naturally couldn't go in for anything that required physical activity."

Philip reddened to the roots of his hair, as he always did when

any reference was made to his club-foot. Mr. Perkins looked at him gravely.

"I wonder if you're not oversensitive about your misfortune. Has it ever struck you to thank God for it?"

Philip looked up quickly. His lips tightened. He remembered how for months, trusting in what they told him, he had implored God to heal him as He had healed the Leper and made the Blind to see.

"As long as you accept it rebelliously it can only cause you shame. But if you looked upon it as a cross that was given you to bear only because your shoulders were strong enough to bear it, a sign of God's favour, then it would be a source of happiness to you instead of misery."

He saw that the boy hated to discuss the matter and he let him go.

But Philip thought over all that the headmaster had said, and presently, his mind taken up entirely with the ceremony that was before him, a mystical rapture seized him. His spirit seemed to free itself from the bonds of the flesh and he seemed to be living a new life. He aspired to perfection with all the passion that was in him. He wanted to surrender himself entirely to the service of God, and he made up his mind definitely that he would be ordained. When the great day arrived, his soul deeply moved by all the preparation, by the books he had studied and above all by the overwhelming influence of the head, he could hardly contain himself for fear and joy. One thought had tormented him. He knew that he would have to walk alone through the chancel, and he dreaded showing his limp thus obviously, not only to the whole school, who were attending the service, but also to the strangers, people from the city or parents who had come to see their sons confirmed. But when the time came he felt suddenly that he could accept the humiliation joyfully; and as he limped up the chancel, very small and insignificant beneath the lofty vaulting of the Cathedral, he offered consciously his deformity as a sacrifice to the God who loved him.

XVIII

But Philip could not live long in the rarefied air of the hill-tops. What had happened to him when first he was seized by the religious emotion happened to him now. Because he felt so keenly the beauty of faith, because the desire for self-sacrifice burned in his heart with such a gem-like glow, his strength seemed inadequate to his ambition. He was tired out by the violence of his passion. His soul was filled on a sudden with a singular aridity. He began to forget the presence of God which had seemed so surrounding; and his religious exercises, still very punctually performed, grew merely formal. At first he blamed himself for this falling away, and the fear of hell-fire urged him to renewed vehemence; but the passion was dead, and gradually other interests distracted his thoughts.

Philip had few friends. His habit of reading isolated him: it became such a need that after being in company for some time he grew tired and restless; he was vain of the wider knowledge he had acquired from the perusal of so many books, his mind was alert, and he had not the skill to hide his contempt for his companions' stupidity. They complained that he was conceited; and, since he excelled only in matters which to them were unimportant, they asked satirically what he had to be conceited about. He was developing a sense of humour, and found that he had a knack of saying bitter things, which caught people on the raw; he said them because they amused him, hardly realising how much they hurt, and was much offended when he found that his victims regarded him with active dislike. The humiliations he suffered when first he went to school had caused in him a shrinking from his fellows which he could never entirely overcome; he remained shy and silent. But though he did everything to alienate the sympathy of other boys he longed with all his heart for the popularity which to some was so easily accorded. These from his distance he admired extravagantly; and though he was inclined to be more sarcastic with them than with others, though he made little jokes at their expense, he would have given anything to change places with them. Indeed he would gladly have changed places with the dullest boy in the school who was whole of limb. He took to a singular habit. He would imagine that he was some boy whom he had a par-

ticular fancy for; he would throw his soul, as it were, into the other's body, talk with his voice and laugh with his laugh; he would imagine himself doing all the things the other did. It was so vivid that he seemed for a moment really to be no longer himself. In this way he enjoyed many intervals of fantastic happiness.

At the beginning of the Christmas term which followed on his confirmation Philip found himself moved into another study. One of the boys who shared it was called Rose. He was in the same form as Philip, and Philip had always looked upon him with envious admiration. He was not good-looking; though his large hands and big bones suggested that he would be a tall man, he was clumsily made; but his eyes were charming, and when he laughed (he was constantly laughing) his face wrinkled all round them in a jolly way. He was neither clever nor stupid, but good enough at his work and better at games. He was a favourite with masters and boys, and he in his turn liked everyone.

When Philip was put in the study he could not help seeing that the others, who had been together for three terms, welcomed him coldly. It made him nervous to feel himself an intruder; but he had learned to hide his feelings, and they found him quiet and unobtrusive. With Rose, because he was as little able as anyone else to resist his charm, Philip was even more than usually shy and abrupt; and whether on account of this, unconsciously bent upon exerting the fascination he knew was his only by the results, or whether from sheer kindness of heart, it was Rose who first took Philip into the circle. One day, quite suddenly, he asked Philip if he would walk to the football field with him. Philip flushed.

"I can't walk fast enough for you," he said.

"Rot. Come on."

And just before they were setting out some boy put his head in the study-door and asked Rose to go with him.

"I can't," he answered. "I've already promised Carey."

"Don't bother about me," said Philip quickly. "I shan't mind."

"Rot," said Rose.

He looked at Philip with those good-natured eyes of his and laughed. Philip felt a curious tremor in his heart.

In a little while, their friendship growing with boyish rapidity, the pair were inseparable. Other fellows wondered at the sudden intimacy, and Rose was asked what he saw in Philip.

"Oh, I don't know," he answered. "He's not half a bad chap really."

Soon they grew accustomed to the two walking into chapel arm in arm or strolling round the precincts in conversation; wherever one was the other could be found also, and, as though acknowledging his proprietorship, boys who wanted Rose would leave messages with Carey. Philip at first was reserved. He would not let himself yield entirely to the proud joy that filled him; but presently his distrust of the fates gave way before a wild happiness. He thought Rose the most wonderful fellow he had ever seen. His books now were insignificant; he could not bother about them when there was something infinitely more important to occupy him. Rose's friends used to come in to tea in the study sometimes or sit about when there was nothing better to do—Rose liked a crowd and the chance of a rag—and they found that Philip was quite a decent fellow. Philip was happy.

When the last day of term came he and Rose arranged by which train they should come back, so that they might meet at the station and have tea in the town before returning to school. Philip went home with a heavy heart. He thought of Rose all through the holidays, and his fancy was active with the things they would do together next term. He was bored at the vicarage, and when on the last day his uncle put him the usual question in the usual facetious tone:

"Well, are you glad to be going back to school?"

Philip answered joyfully:

"Rather."

In order to be sure of meeting Rose at the station he took an earlier train than he usually did, and he waited about the platform for an hour. When the train came in from Faversham, where he knew Rose had to change, he ran along it excitedly. But Rose was not there. He got a porter to tell him when another train was due, and he waited; but again he was disappointed; and he was cold and hungry, so he walked, through side-streets and slums, by a short cut to the school. He found Rose in the study, with his feet on the chimney-piece, talking eighteen to the dozen with half a dozen boys who were sitting on whatever there was to sit on. He shook hands with Philip enthusiastically, but Philip's face fell, for he realised that Rose had forgotten all about their appointment.

"I say, why are you so late?" said Rose. "I thought you were never coming."

"You were at the station at half-past four," said another boy. "I saw you when I came."

Philip blushed a little. He did not want Rose to know that he had been such a fool as to wait for him.

"I had to see about a friend of my people's," he invented readily. "I was asked to see her off."

But his disappointment made him a little sulky. He sat in silence, and when spoken to answered in monosyllables. He was making up his mind to have it out with Rose when they were alone. But when the others had gone Rose at once came over and sat on the arm of the chair in which Philip was lounging.

"I say, I'm jolly glad we're in the same study this term. Ripping, isn't it?"

He seemed so genuinely pleased to see Philip that Philip's annoyance vanished. They began as if they had not been separated for five minutes to talk eagerly of the thousand things that interested them.

XIX

At first Philip had been too grateful for Rose's friendship to make any demands on him. He took things as they came and enjoyed life. But presently he began to resent Rose's universal amiability; he wanted a more exclusive attachment, and he claimed as a right what before he had accepted as a favour. He watched jealously Rose's companionship with others; and though he knew it was unreasonable could not help sometimes saying bitter things to him. If Rose spent an hour playing the fool in another study, Philip would receive him when he returned to his own with a sullen frown. He would sulk for a day, and he suffered more because Rose either did not notice his ill-humour or deliberately ignored it. Not seldom Philip, knowing all the time how stupid he was, would force a quarrel, and they would not speak to one another for a couple of days. But Philip could not bear to be angry with him long, and even when convinced that he was in the right, would apologise humbly. Then for a week they would be as great friends as ever. But the best was over, and Philip could see that Rose often walked with him merely from old habit or from fear of his anger; they had not so much to say to one another as at first, and Rose was often bored. Philip felt that his lameness began to irritate him.

Towards the end of the term two or three boys caught scarlet fever, and there was much talk of sending them all home in order to escape an epidemic; but the sufferers were isolated, and since no more were attacked it was supposed that the outbreak was stopped. One of the stricken was Philip. He remained in hospital through the Easter holidays, and at the beginning of the summer term was sent home to the vicarage to get a little fresh air. The Vicar, notwithstanding medical assurance that the boy was no longer infectious, received him with suspicion; he thought it very inconsiderate of the doctor to suggest that his nephew's convalescence should be spent by the sea-side, and consented to have him in the house only because there was nowhere else he could go.

Philip went back to school at half-term. He had forgotten the quarrels he had had with Rose, but remembered only that he was his greatest friend. He knew that he had been silly. He made up his mind to be more reasonable. During his illness Rose

had sent him in a couple of little notes, and he had ended each with the words: "Hurry up and come back." Philip thought Rose must be looking forward as much to his return as he was himself to seeing Rose.

He found that owing to the death from scarlet fever of one of the boys in the Sixth there had been some shifting in the studies and Rose was no longer in his. It was a bitter disappointment. But as soon as he arrived he burst into Rose's study. Rose was sitting at his desk, working with a boy called Hunter, and turned round crossly as Philip came in.

"Who the devil's that?" he cried. And then, seeing Philip: "Oh, it's you."

Philip stopped in embarrassment.

"I thought I'd come in and see how you were."

"We were just working."

Hunter broke into the conversation.

"When did you get back?"

"Five minutes ago."

They sat and looked at him as though he was disturbing them. They evidently expected him to go quickly. Philip reddened.

"I'll be off. You might look in when you've done," he said to Rose.

"All right."

Philip closed the door behind him and limped back to his own study. He felt frightfully hurt. Rose, far from seeming glad to see him, had looked almost put out. They might never have been more than acquaintances. Though he waited in his study, not leaving it for a moment in case just then Rose should come, his friend never appeared; and next morning when he went into prayers he saw Rose and Hunter swinging along arm in arm. What he could not see for himself others told him. He had forgotten that three months is a long time in a school-boy's life, and though he had passed them in solitude Rose had lived in the world. Hunter had stepped into the vacant place. Philip found that Rose was quietly avoiding him. But he was not the boy to accept a situation without putting it into words; he waited till he was sure Rose was alone in his study and went in.

"May I come in?" he asked.

Rose looked at him with an embarrassment that made him angry with Philip.

"Yes, if you want to."

"It's very kind of you," said Philip sarcastically.

"What d'you want?"

"I say, why have you been so rotten since I came back?"

"Oh, don't be an ass," said Rose.

"I don't know what you see in Hunter."

"That's my business."

Philip looked down. He could not bring himself to say what was in his heart. He was afraid of humiliating himself. Rose got up.

"I've got to go to the Gym," he said.

When he was at the door Philip forced himself to speak.

"I say, Rose, don't be a perfect beast."

"Oh, go to hell."

Rose slammed the door behind him and left Philip alone. Philip shivered with rage. He went back to his study and turned the conversation over in his mind. He hated Rose now, he wanted to hurt him, he thought of biting things he might have said to him. He brooded over the end to their friendship and fancied that others were talking of it. In his sensitiveness he saw sneers and wonderings in other fellows' manner when they were not bothering their heads with him at all. He imagined to himself what they were saying.

"After all, it wasn't likely to last long. I wonder he ever stuck Carey at all. Blighter!"

To show his indifference he struck up a violent friendship with a boy called Sharp whom he hated and despised. He was a London boy, with a loutish air, a heavy fellow with the beginnings of a moustache on his lip and bushy eyebrows that joined one another across the bridge of his nose. He had soft hands and manners too suave for his years. He spoke with the suspicion of a cockney accent. He was one of those boys who are too slack to play games, and he exercised great ingenuity in making excuses to avoid such as were compulsory. He was regarded by boys and masters with a vague dislike, and it was from arrogance that Philip now sought his society. Sharp in a couple of terms was going to Germany for a year. He hated school, which he looked upon as an indignity to be endured till he was old enough to go out into the world. London was all he cared for, and he had many stories to tell of his doings there during the holidays. From his conversation—he spoke in a soft, deep-toned voice—there emerged the vague rumour of the London streets by night. Philip listened to him at once fascinated and repelled. With his vivid fancy he seemed to see the surging throng round the pit-door of theatres, and the glitter of cheap restaurants, bars where men, half drunk, sat on high stools talking with barmaids;

and under the street lamps the mysterious passing of dark crowds bent upon pleasure. Sharp lent him cheap novels from Holywell Row, which Philip read in his cubicle with a sort of wonderful fear.

Once Rose tried to effect a reconciliation. He was a good-natured fellow, who did not like having enemies.

"I say, Carey, why are you being such a silly ass? It doesn't do you any good cutting me and all that."

"I don't know what you mean," answered Philip.

"Well, I don't see why we shouldn't talk."

"You bore me," said Philip.

"Please yourself."

Rose shrugged his shoulders and left him. Philip was very white, as he always became when he was moved, and his heart beat violently. When Rose went away he felt suddenly sick with misery. He did not know why he had answered in that fashion. He would have given anything to be friends with Rose. He hated to have quarrelled with him, and now that he saw he had given him pain he was very sorry. But at the moment he had not been master of himself. It seemed that some devil had seized him, forcing him to say bitter things against his will, even though at the time he wanted to shake hands with Rose and meet him more than half-way. The desire to wound had been too strong for him. He had wanted to revenge himself for the pain and the humiliation he had endured. It was pride: it was folly too, for he knew that Rose would not care at all, while he would suffer bitterly. The thought came to him that he would go to Rose, and say:

"I say, I'm sorry I was such a beast. I couldn't help it. Let's make it up."

But he knew he would never be able to do it. He was afraid that Rose would sneer at him. He was angry with himself, and when Sharp came in a little while afterwards he seized upon the first opportunity to quarrel with him. Philip had a fiendish instinct for discovering other people's raw spots, and was able to say things that rankled because they were true. But Sharp had the last word.

"I heard Rose talking about you to Mellor just now," he said. "Mellor said: why didn't you kick him? It would teach him manners. And Rose said: I didn't like to. Damned cripple."

Philip suddenly became scarlet. He could not answer, for there was a lump in his throat that almost choked him.

XX

Philip was moved into the Sixth, but he hated school now with all his heart, and, having lost his ambition, cared nothing whether he did ill or well. He awoke in the morning with a sinking heart because he must go through another day of drudgery. He was tired of having to do things because he was told; and the restrictions irked him, not because they were unreasonable, but because they were restrictions. He yearned for freedom. He was weary of repeating things that he knew already and of the hammering away, for the sake of a thick-witted fellow, at something that he understood from the beginning.

With Mr. Perkins you could work or not as you chose. He was at once eager and abstracted. The Sixth Form room was in a part of the old abbey which had been restored, and it had a Gothic window: Philip tried to cheat his boredom by drawing this over and over again; and sometimes out of his head he drew the great tower of the Cathedral or the gateway that led into the precincts. He had a knack for drawing. Aunt Louisa during her youth had painted in water colours, and she had several albums filled with sketches of churches, old bridges, and picturesque cottages. They were often shown at the vicarage tea-parties. She had once given Philip a paint-box as a Christmas present, and he had started by copying her pictures. He copied them better than anyone could have expected, and presently he did little pictures of his own. Mrs. Carey encouraged him. It was a good way to keep him out of mischief, and later on his sketches would be useful for bazaars. Two or three of them had been framed and hung in his bed-room.

But one day, at the end of the morning's work, Mr. Perkins stopped him as he was lounging out of the form-room.

"I want to speak to you, Carey."

Philip waited. Mr. Perkins ran his lean fingers through his beard and looked at Philip. He seemed to be thinking over what he wanted to say.

"What's the matter with you, Carey?" he said abruptly.

Philip, flushing, looked at him quickly. But knowing him well by now, without answering, he waited for him to go on.

"I've been dissatisfied with you lately. You've been slack and

inattentive. You seem to take no interest in your work. It's been slovenly and bad."

"I'm very sorry, sir," said Philip.

"Is that all you have to say for yourself?"

Philip looked down sulkily. How could he answer that he was bored to death?

"You know, this term you'll go down instead of up. I shan't give you a very good report."

Philip wondered what he would say if he knew how the report was treated. It arrived at breakfast, Mr. Carey glanced at it indifferently, and passed it over to Philip.

"There's your report. You'd better see what it says," he remarked, as he ran his fingers through the wrapper of a catalogue of second-hand books.

Philip read it.

"Is it good?" asked Aunt Louisa.

"Not so good as I deserve," answered Philip, with a smile, giving it to her.

"I'll read it afterwards when I've got my spectacles," she said.

But after breakfast Mary Ann came in to say the butcher was there, and she generally forgot.

Mr. Perkins went on.

"I'm disappointed with you. And I can't understand. I know you *can* do things if you want to, but you don't seem to want to any more. I was going to make you a monitor next term, but I think I'd better wait a bit."

Philip flushed. He did not like the thought of being passed over. He tightened his lips.

"And there's something else. You must begin thinking of your scholarship now. You won't get anything unless you start working very seriously."

Philip was irritated by the lecture. He was angry with the headmaster, and angry with himself.

"I don't think I'm going up to Oxford," he said.

"Why not? I thought your idea was to be ordained."

"I've changed my mind."

"Why?"

Philip did not answer. Mr. Perkins, holding himself oddly as he always did, like a figure in one of Perugino's pictures, drew his fingers thoughtfully through his beard. He looked at Philip as though he were trying to understand and then abruptly told him he might go.

Apparently he was not satisfied, for one evening, a week later,

when Philip had to go into his study with some papers, he resumed the conversation; but this time he adopted a different method: he spoke to Philip not as a schoolmaster with a boy but as one human being with another. He did not seem to care now that Philip's work was poor, that he ran small chance against keen rivals of carrying off the scholarship necessary for him to go to Oxford: the important matter was his changed intention about his life afterwards. Mr. Perkins set himself to revive his eagerness to be ordained. With infinite skill he worked on his feelings, and this was easier since he was himself genuinely moved. Philip's change of mind caused him bitter distress, and he really thought he was throwing away his chance of happiness in life for he knew not what. His voice was very persuasive. And Philip, easily moved by the emotion of others, very emotional himself notwithstanding a placid exterior—his face, partly by nature but also from the habit of all these years at school, seldom except by his quick flushing showed what he felt—Philip was deeply touched by what the master said. He was very grateful to him for the interest he showed, and he was conscience-stricken by the grief which he felt his behaviour caused him. It was subtly flattering to know that with the whole school to think about Mr. Perkins should trouble with him, but at the same time something else in him, like another person standing at his elbow, clung desperately to two words.

"I won't. I won't. I won't."

He felt himself slipping. He was powerless against the weakness that seemed to well up in him; it was like the water that rises up in an empty bottle held over a full basin; and he set his teeth, saying the words over and over to himself.

"I won't. I won't. I won't."

At last Mr. Perkins put his hand on Philip's shoulder.

"I don't want to influence you," he said. "You must decide for yourself. Pray to Almighty God for help and guidance."

When Philip came out of the headmaster's house there was a light rain falling. He went under the archway that led to the precincts, there was not a soul there, and the rooks were silent in the elms. He walked round slowly. He felt hot, and the rain did him good. He thought over all that Mr. Perkins had said, calmly now that he was withdrawn from the fervour of his personality, and he was thankful he had not given way.

In the darkness he could but vaguely see the great mass of the Cathedral: he hated it now because of the irksomeness of the long services which he was forced to attend. The anthem was

interminable, and you had to stand drearily while it was being sung; you could not hear the droning sermon, and your body twitched because you had to sit still when you wanted to move about. Then Philip thought of the two services every Sunday at Blackstable. The church was bare and cold, and there was a smell all about one of pomade and starched clothes. The curate preached once and his uncle preached once. As he grew up he had learned to know his uncle; Philip was downright and intolerant, and he could not understand that a man might sincerely say things as a clergyman which he never acted up to as a man. The deception outraged him. His uncle was a weak and selfish man, whose chief desire it was to be saved trouble.

Mr. Perkins had spoken to him of the beauty of a life dedicated to the service of God. Philip knew what sort of lives the clergy led in the corner of East Anglia which was his home. There was the Vicar of Whitestone, a parish a little way from Blackstable: he was a bachelor and to give himself something to do had lately taken up farming: the local paper constantly reported the cases he had in the county court against this one and that, labourers he would not pay their wages to or tradesmen whom he accused of cheating him; scandal said he starved his cows, and there was much talk about some general action which should be taken against him. Then there was the Vicar of Ferne, a bearded, fine figure of a man: his wife had been forced to leave him because of his cruelty, and she had filled the neighbourhood with stories of his immorality. The Vicar of Surle, a tiny hamlet by the sea, was to be seen every evening in the public house a stone's throw from his vicarage; and the churchwardens had been to Mr. Carey to ask his advice. There was not a soul for any of them to talk to except small farmers or fishermen; there were long winter evenings when the wind blew, whistling drearily through the leafless trees, and all around they saw nothing but the bare monotony of ploughed fields; and there was poverty, and there was lack of any work that seemed to matter; every kink in their characters had free play; there was nothing to restrain them; they grew narrow and eccentric: Philip knew all this, but in his young intolerance he did not offer it as an excuse. He shivered at the thought of leading such a life; he wanted to get out into the world.

XXI

Mr. Perkins soon saw that his words had had no effect on Philip, and for the rest of the term ignored him. He wrote a report which was vitriolic. When it arrived and Aunt Louisa asked Philip what it was like, he answered cheerfully:

"Rotten."

"Is it?" said the Vicar. "I must look at it again."

"Do you think there's any use in my staying on at Tercanbury? I should have thought it would be better if I went to Germany for a bit."

"What has put that in your head?" said Aunt Louisa.

"Don't you think it's rather a good idea?"

Sharp had already left King's School and had written to Philip from Hanover. He was really starting life, and it made Philip more restless to think of it. He felt he could not bear another year of restraint.

"But then you wouldn't get a scholarship."

"I haven't a chance of getting one anyhow. And besides, I don't know that I particularly want to go to Oxford."

"But if you're going to be ordained, Philip?" Aunt Louisa exclaimed in dismay.

"I've given up that idea long ago."

Mrs. Carey looked at him with startled eyes, and then, used to self-restraint, she poured out another cup of tea for his uncle. They did not speak. In a moment Philip saw tears slowly falling down her cheeks. His heart was suddenly wrung because he caused her pain. In her tight black dress, made by the dressmaker down the street, with her wrinkled face and pale tired eyes, her gray hair still done in the frivolous ringlets of her youth, she was a ridiculous but strangely pathetic figure. Philip saw it for the first time.

Afterwards, when the Vicar was shut up in his study with the curate, he put his arm round her waist.

"I say, I'm sorry you're upset, Aunt Louisa," he said. "But it's no good my being ordained if I haven't a real vocation, is it?"

"I'm so disappointed, Philip," she moaned. "I'd set my heart on it. I thought you could be your uncle's curate, and then when our time came—after all, we can't last for ever, can we?—you might have taken his place."

Philip shivered. He was seized with panic. His heart beat like a pigeon in a trap beating with its wings. His aunt wept softly, her head upon his shoulder.

"I wish you'd persuade Uncle William to let me leave Tercanbury. I'm so sick of it."

But the Vicar of Blackstable did not easily alter any arrangements he had made, and it had always been intended that Philip should stay at King's School till he was eighteen, and should then go to Oxford. At all events he would not hear of Philip leaving then, for no notice had been given and the term's fee would have to be paid in any case.

"Then will you give notice for me to leave at Christmas?" said Philip, at the end of a long and often bitter conversation.

"I'll write to Mr. Perkins about it and see what he says."

"Oh, I wish to goodness I were twenty-one. It is awful to be at somebody else's beck and call."

"Philip, you shouldn't speak to your uncle like that," said Mrs. Carey gently.

"But don't you see that Perkins will want me to stay? He gets so much a head for every chap in the school."

"Why don't you want to go to Oxford?"

"What's the good if I'm not going into the Church?"

"You can't go into the Church: you're in the Church already," said the Vicar.

"Ordained then," replied Philip impatiently.

"What are you going to be, Philip?" asked Mrs. Carey.

"I don't know. I've not made up my mind. But whatever I am, it'll be useful to know foreign languages. I shall get far more out of a year in Germany than by staying on at that hole."

He would not say that he felt Oxford would be little better than a continuation of his life at school. He wished immensely to be his own master. Besides he would be known to a certain extent among old schoolfellows, and he wanted to get away from them all. He felt that his life at school had been a failure. He wanted to start fresh.

It happened that his desire to go to Germany fell in with certain ideas which had been of late discussed at Blackstable. Sometimes friends came to stay with the doctor and brought news of the world outside; and the visitors spending August by the sea had their own way of looking at things. The Vicar had heard that there were people who did not think the old-fashioned education so useful nowadays as it had been in the past, and modern languages were gaining an importance which they had not had in

his own youth. His own mind was divided, for a younger brother of his had been sent to Germany when he failed in some examination, thus creating a precedent, but since he had there died of typhoid it was impossible to look upon the experiment as other than dangerous. The result of innumerable conversations was that Philip should go back to Tercanbury for another term, and then should leave. With this agreement Philip was not dissatisfied. But when he had been back a few days the headmaster spoke to him.

"I've had a letter from your uncle. It appears you want to go to Germany, and he asks me what I think about it."

Philip was astounded. He was furious with his guardian for going back on his word.

"I thought it was settled, sir," he said.

"Far from it. I've written to say I think it the greatest mistake to take you away."

Philip immediately sat down and wrote a violent letter to his uncle. He did not measure his language. He was so angry that he could not get to sleep till quite late that night, and he awoke in the early morning and began brooding over the way they had treated him. He waited impatiently for an answer. In two or three days it came. It was a mild, pained letter from Aunt Louisa, saying that he should not write such things to his uncle, who was very much distressed. He was unkind and unchristian. He must know they were only trying to do their best for him, and they were so much older than he that they must be better judges of what was good for him. Philip clenched his hands. He had heard that statement so often, and he could not see why it was true; they did not know the conditions as he did, why should they accept it as self-evident that their greater age gave them greater wisdom? The letter ended with the information that Mr. Carey had withdrawn the notice he had given.

Philip nursed his wrath till the next half-holiday. They had them on Tuesdays and Thursdays, since on Saturday afternoons they had to go to a service in the Cathedral. He stopped behind when the rest of the Sixth went out.

"May I go to Blackstable this afternoon, please, sir?" he asked.

"No," said the headmaster briefly.

"I wanted to see my uncle about something very important."

"Didn't you hear me say no?"

Philip did not answer. He went out. He felt almost sick with humiliation, the humiliation of having to ask and the

humiliation of the curt refusal. He hated the headmaster now. Philip writhed under that despotism which never vouchsafed a reason for the most tyrannous act. He was too angry to care what he did, and after dinner walked down to the station, by the back ways he knew so well, just in time to catch the train to Blackstable. He walked into the vicarage and found his uncle and aunt sitting in the dining-room.

"Hulloa, where have you sprung from?" said the Vicar.

It was very clear that he was not pleased to see him. He looked a little uneasy.

"I thought I'd come and see you about my leaving. I want to know what you mean by promising me one thing when I was here, and doing something different a week after."

He was a little frightened at his own boldness, but he had made up his mind exactly what words to use, and, though his heart beat violently, he forced himself to say them.

"Have you got leave to come here this afternoon?"

"No. I asked Perkins and he refused. If you like to write and tell him I've been here you can get me into a really fine old row."

Mrs. Carey sat knitting with trembling hands. She was unused to scenes and they agitated her extremely.

"It would serve you right if I told him," said Mr. Carey.

"If you like to be a perfect sneak you can. After writing to Perkins as you did you're quite capable of it."

It was foolish of Philip to say that, because it gave the Vicar exactly the opportunity he wanted.

"I'm not going to sit still while you say impertinent things to me," he said with dignity.

He got up and walked quickly out of the room into his study. Philip heard him shut the door and lock it.

"Oh, I wish to God I were twenty-one. It is awful to be tied down like this."

Aunt Louisa began to cry quietly.

"Oh, Philip, you oughtn't to have spoken to your uncle like that. Do please go and tell him you're sorry."

"I'm not in the least sorry. He's taking a mean advantage. Of course it's just waste of money keeping me on at school, but what does he care? It's not his money. It was cruel to put me under the guardianship of people who know nothing about things."

"Philip."

Philip in his voluble anger stopped suddenly at the sound of

her voice. It was heart-broken. He had not realised what bitter things he was saying.

"Philip, how can you be so unkind? You know we are only trying to do our best for you, and we know that we have no experience; it isn't as if we'd had any children of our own: that's why we consulted Mr. Perkins." Her voice broke. "I've tried to be like a mother to you. I've loved you as if you were my own son."

She was so small and frail, there was something so pathetic in her old-maidish air, that Philip was touched. A great lump came suddenly in his throat and his eyes filled with tears.

"I'm so sorry," he said. "I didn't mean to be beastly."

He knelt down beside her and took her in his arms, and kissed her wet, withered cheeks. She sobbed bitterly, and he seemed to feel on a sudden the pity of that wasted life. She had never surrendered herself before to such a display of emotion.

"I know I've not been what I wanted to be to you, Philip, but I didn't know how. It's been just as dreadful for me to have no children as for you to have no mother."

Philip forgot his anger and his own concerns, but thought only of consoling her, with broken words and clumsy little caresses. Then the clock struck, and he had to bolt off at once to catch the only train that would get him back to Tercanbury in time for call-over. As he sat in the corner of the railway carriage he saw that he had done nothing. He was angry with himself for his weakness. It was despicable to have allowed himself to be turned from his purpose by the pompous airs of the Vicar and the tears of his aunt. But as the result of he knew not what conversations between the couple another letter was written to the headmaster. Mr. Perkins read it with an impatient shrug of the shoulders. He showed it to Philip. It ran:

Dear Mr. Perkins,

Forgive me for troubling you again about my ward, but both his Aunt and I have been uneasy about him. He seems very anxious to leave school, and his Aunt thinks he is unhappy. It is very difficult for us to know what to do as we are not his parents. He does not seem to think he is doing very well and he feels it is wasting his money to stay on. I should be very much obliged if you would have a talk to him, and if he is still of the same mind perhaps it would be better if he left at Christmas as I originally intended.

Yours very truly, *William Carey.*

Philip gave him back the letter. He felt a thrill of pride in his triumph. He had got his own way, and he was satisfied. His will had gained a victory over the wills of others.

"It's not much good my spending half an hour writing to your uncle if he changes his mind the next letter he gets from you," said the headmaster irritably.

Philip said nothing, and his face was perfectly placid; but he could not prevent the twinkle in his eyes. Mr. Perkins noticed it and broke into a little laugh.

"You've rather scored, haven't you?" he said.

Then Philip smiled outright. He could not conceal his exultation.

"Is it true that you're very anxious to leave?"

"Yes, sir."

"Are you unhappy here?"

Philip blushed. He hated instinctively any attempt to get into the depths of his feelings.

"Oh, I don't know, sir."

Mr. Perkins, slowly dragging his fingers through his beard, looked at him thoughtfully. He seemed to speak almost to himself.

"Of course schools are made for the average. The holes are all round, and whatever shape the pegs are they must wedge in somehow. One hasn't time to bother about anything but the average." Then suddenly he addressed himself to Philip: "Look here, I've got a suggestion to make to you. It's getting on towards the end of the term now. Another term won't kill you, and if you want to go to Germany you'd better go after Easter than after Christmas. It'll be much pleasanter in the spring than in midwinter. If at the end of next term you still want to go I'll make no objection. What d'you say to that?"

"Thank you very much, sir."

Philip was so glad to have gained the last three months that he did not mind the extra term. The school seemed less of a prison when he knew that before Easter he would be free from it for ever. His heart danced within him. That evening in chapel he looked round at the boys, standing according to their forms, each in his due place, and he chuckled with satisfaction at the thought that soon he would never see them again. It made him regard them almost with a friendly feeling. His eyes rested on Rose. Rose took his position as a monitor very seriously: he had quite an idea of being a good influence in the school; it was his turn to read the lesson that evening, and he read it very well. Philip

smiled when he thought that he would be rid of him for ever, and it would not matter in six months whether Rose was tall and straight-limbed; and where would the importance be that he was a monitor and captain of the eleven? Philip looked at the masters in their gowns. Gordon was dead, he had died of apoplexy two years before, but all the rest were there. Philip knew now what a poor lot they were, except Turner perhaps, there was something of a man in him; and he writhed at the thought of the subjection in which they had held him. In six months they would not matter either. Their praise would mean nothing to him, and he would shrug his shoulders at their censure.

Philip had learned not to express his emotions by outward signs, and shyness still tormented him, but he had often very high spirits; and then, though he limped about demurely, silent and reserved, it seemed to be hallooing in his heart. He seemed to himself to walk more lightly. All sorts of ideas danced through his head, fancies chased one another so furiously that he could not catch them; but their coming and their going filled him with exhilaration. Now, being happy, he was able to work, and during the remaining weeks of the term set himself to make up for his long neglect. His brain worked easily, and he took a keen pleasure in the activity of his intellect. He did very well in the examinations that closed the term. Mr. Perkins made only one remark: he was talking to him about an essay he had written, and, after the usual criticisms, said:

"So you've made up your mind to stop playing the fool for a bit, have you?"

He smiled at him with his shining teeth, and Philip, looking down, gave an embarrassed smile.

The half dozen boys who expected to divide between them the various prizes which were given at the end of the summer term had ceased to look upon Philip as a serious rival, but now they began to regard him with some uneasiness. He told no one that he was leaving at Easter and so was in no sense a competitor, but left them to their anxieties. He knew that Rose flattered himself on his French, for he had spent two or three holidays in France; and he expected to get the Dean's Prize for English essay; Philip got a good deal of satisfaction in watching his dismay when he saw how much better Philip was doing in these subjects than himself. Another fellow, Norton, could not go to Oxford unless he got one of the scholarships at the disposal of the school. He asked Philip if he was going in for them.

"Have you any objection?" asked Philip.

It entertained him to think that he held someone else's future in his hand. There was something romantic in getting these various rewards actually in his grasp, and then leaving them to others because he disdained them. At last the breaking-up day came, and he went to Mr. Perkins to bid him good-bye.

"You don't mean to say you really want to leave?"

Philip's face fell at the headmaster's evident surprise.

"You said you wouldn't put any objection in the way, sir," he answered.

"I thought it was only a whim that I'd better humour. I know you're obstinate and headstrong. What on earth d'you want to leave for now? You've only got another term in any case. You can get the Magdalen scholarship easily; you'll get half the prizes we've got to give."

Philip looked at him sullenly. He felt that he had been tricked; but he had the promise, and Perkins would have to stand by it.

"You'll have a very pleasant time at Oxford. You needn't decide at once what you're going to do afterwards. I wonder if you realise how delightful the life is up there for anyone who has brains."

"I've made all my arrangements now to go to Germany, sir," said Philip.

"Are they arrangements that couldn't possibly be altered?" asked Mr. Perkins, with his quizzical smile. "I shall be very sorry to lose you. In schools the rather stupid boys who work always do better than the clever boy who's idle, but when the clever boy works—why then, he does what you've done this term."

Philip flushed darkly. He was unused to compliments, and no one had ever told him he was clever. The headmaster put his hand on Philip's shoulder.

"You know, driving things into the heads of thick-witted boys is dull work, but when now and then you have the chance of teaching a boy who comes half-way towards you, who understands almost before you've got the words out of your mouth, why, then teaching is the most exhilarating thing in the world."

Philip was melted by kindness; it had never occurred to him that it mattered really to Mr. Perkins whether he went or stayed. He was touched and immensely flattered. It would be pleasant to end up his school-days with glory and then go to Oxford: in a flash there appeared before him the life which he had heard described from boys who came back to play in the O. K. S. match or in letters from the University read out in one of the studies.

But he was ashamed; he would look such a fool in his own eyes if he gave in now; his uncle would chuckle at the success of the headmaster's ruse. It was rather a come-down from the dramatic surrender of all these prizes which were in his reach, because he disdained to take them, to the plain, ordinary winning of them. It only required a little more persuasion, just enough to save his self-respect, and Philip would have done anything that Mr. Perkins wished; but his face showed nothing of his conflicting emotions. It was placid and sullen.

"I think I'd rather go, sir," he said.

Mr. Perkins, like many men who manage things by their personal influence, grew a little impatient when his power was not immediately manifest. He had a great deal of work to do, and could not waste more time on a boy who seemed to him insanely obstinate.

"Very well, I promised to let you if you really wanted it, and I keep my promise. When do you go to Germany?"

Philip's heart beat violently. The battle was won, and he did not know whether he had not rather lost it.

"At the beginning of May, sir," he answered.

"Well, you must come and see us when you get back."

He held out his hand. If he had given him one more chance Philip would have changed his mind, but he seemed to look upon the matter as settled. Philip walked out of the house. His school-days were over, and he was free; but the wild exultation to which he had looked forward at that moment was not there. He walked round the precincts slowly, and a profound depression seized him. He wished now that he had not been foolish. He did not want to go, but he knew he could never bring himself to go to the headmaster and tell him he would stay. That was a humiliation he could never put upon himself. He wondered whether he had done right. He was dissatisfied with himself and with all his circumstances. He asked himself dully whether whenever you got your way you wished afterwards that you hadn't.

XXII

Philip's uncle had an old friend, called Miss Wilkinson, who lived in Berlin. She was the daughter of a clergyman, and it was with her father, the rector of a village in Lincolnshire, that Mr. Carey had spent his last curacy; on his death, forced to earn her living, she had taken various situations as a governess in France and Germany. She had kept up a correspondence with Mrs. Carey, and two or three times had spent her holidays at Blackstable Vicarage, paying as was usual with the Careys' unfrequent guests a small sum for her keep. When it became clear that it was less trouble to yield to Philip's wishes than to resist them, Mrs. Carey wrote to ask her for advice. Miss Wilkinson recommended Heidelberg as an excellent place to learn German in and the house of Frau Professor Erlin as a comfortable home. Philip might live there for thirty marks a week, and the Professor himself, a teacher at the local high school, would instruct him.

Philip arrived in Heidelberg one morning in May. His things were put on a barrow and he followed the porter out of the station. The sky was bright blue, and the trees in the avenue through which they passed were thick with leaves; there was something in the air fresh to Philip, and mingled with the timidity he felt at entering on a new life, among strangers, was a great exhilaration. He was a little disconsolate that no one had come to meet him, and felt very shy when the porter left him at the front door of a big white house. An untidy lad let him in and took him into a drawing-room. It was filled with a large suite covered in green velvet, and in the middle was a round table. On this in water stood a bouquet of flowers tightly packed together in a paper frill like the bone of a mutton chop, and carefully spaced round it were books in leather bindings. There was a musty smell.

Presently, with an odour of cooking, the Frau Professor came in, a short, very stout woman with tightly dressed hair and a red face; she had little eyes, sparkling like beads, and an effusive manner. She took both Philip's hands and asked him about Miss Wilkinson, who had twice spent a few weeks with her. She spoke in German and in broken English. Philip could not make her understand that he did not know Miss Wilkinson. Then her two daughters appeared. They seemed hardly young to Philip, but

perhaps they were not more than twenty-five: the elder, Thekla, was as short as her mother, with the same, rather shifty air, but with a pretty face and abundant dark hair; Anna, her younger sister, was tall and plain, but since she had a pleasant smile Philip immediately preferred her. After a few minutes of polite conversation the Frau Professor took Philip to his room and left him. It was in a turret, looking over the tops of the trees in the Anlage; and the bed was in an alcove, so that when you sat at the desk it had not the look of a bed-room at all. Philip unpacked his things and set out all his books. He was his own master at last.

A bell summoned him to dinner at one o'clock, and he found the Frau Professor's guests assembled in the drawing-room. He was introduced to her husband, a tall man of middle age with a large fair head, turning now to gray, and mild blue eyes. He spoke to Philip in correct, rather archaic English, having learned it from a study of the English classics, not from conversation; and it was odd to hear him use words colloquially which Philip had only met in the plays of Shakespeare. Frau Professor Erlin called her establishment a family and not a pension; but it would have required the subtlety of a metaphysician to find out exactly where the difference lay. When they sat down to dinner in a long dark apartment that led out of the drawing-room, Philip, feeling very shy, saw that there were sixteen people. The Frau Professor sat at one end and carved. The service was conducted, with a great clattering of plates, by the same clumsy lout who had opened the door for him; and though he was quick, it happened that the first persons to be served had finished before the last had received their appointed portions. The Frau Professor insisted that nothing but German should be spoken, so that Philip, even if his bashfulness had permitted him to be talkative, was forced to hold his tongue. He looked at the people among whom he was to live. By the Frau Professor sat several old ladies, but Philip did not give them much of his attention. There were two young girls, both fair and one of them very pretty, whom Philip heard addressed as Fräulein Hedwig and Fräulein Cäcilie. Fräulein Cäcilie had a long pig-tail hanging down her back. They sat side by side and chattered to one another, with smothered laughter: now and then they glanced at Philip and one of them said something in an undertone; they both giggled, and Philip blushed awkwardly, feeling that they were making fun of him. Near them sat a Chinaman, with a yellow face and an expansive smile, who was studying Western conditions at the University. He spoke so quickly, with a queer accent, that the

girls could not always understand him, and then they burst out laughing. He laughed too, good-humouredly, and his almond eyes almost closed as he did so. There were two or three American men, in black coats, rather yellow and dry of skin: they were theological students; Philip heard the twang of their New England accent through their bad German, and he glanced at them with suspicion; for he had been taught to look upon Americans as wild and desperate barbarians.

Afterwards, when they had sat for a little on the stiff green velvet chairs of the drawing-room, Fräulein Anna asked Philip if he would like to go for a walk with them.

Philip accepted the invitation. They were quite a party. There were the two daughters of the Frau Professor, the two other girls, one of the American students, and Philip. Philip walked by the side of Anna and Fräulein Hedwig. He was a little fluttered. He had never known any girls. At Blackstable there were only the farmers' daughters and the girls of the local tradesmen. He knew them by name and by sight, but he was timid, and he thought they laughed at his deformity. He accepted willingly the difference which the Vicar and Mrs. Carey put between their own exalted rank and that of the farmers. The doctor had two daughters, but they were both much older than Philip and had been married to successive assistants while Philip was still a small boy. At school there had been two or three girls of more boldness than modesty whom some of the boys knew; and desperate stories, due in all probability to the masculine imagination, were told of intrigues with them; but Philip had always concealed under a lofty contempt the terror with which they filled him. His imagination and the books he had read had inspired in him a desire for the Byronic attitude; and he was torn between a morbid self-consciousness and a conviction that he owed it to himself to be gallant. He felt now that he should be bright and amusing, but his brain seemed empty and he could not for the life of him think of anything to say. Fräulein Anna, the Frau Professor's daughter, addressed herself to him frequently from a sense of duty, but the other said little: she looked at him now and then with sparkling eyes, and sometimes to his confusion laughed outright. Philip felt that she thought him perfectly ridiculous. They walked along the side of a hill among pine-trees, and their pleasant odour caused Philip a keen delight. The day was warm and cloudless. At last they came to an eminence from which they saw the valley of the Rhine spread out before them under the sun. It was a vast stretch of country, sparkling with golden light, with cities

in the distance; and through it meandered the silver ribband of the river. Wide spaces are rare in the corner of Kent which Philip knew, the sea offers the only broad horizon, and the immense distance he saw now gave him a peculiar, an indescribable thrill. He felt suddenly elated. Though he did not know it, it was the first time that he had experienced, quite undiluted with foreign emotions, the sense of beauty. They sat on a bench, the three of them, for the others had gone on, and while the girls talked in rapid German, Philip, indifferent to their proximity, feasted his eyes.

"By Jove, I am happy," he said to himself unconsciously.

XXIII

Philip thought occasionally of the King's School at Tercanbury, and laughed to himself as he remembered what at some particular moment of the day they were doing. Now and then he dreamed that he was there still, and it gave him an extraordinary satisfaction, on awaking, to realise that he was in his little room in the turret. From his bed he could see the great cumulus clouds that hung in the blue sky. He revelled in his freedom. He could go to bed when he chose and get up when the fancy took him. There was no one to order him about. It struck him that he need not tell any more lies.

It had been arranged that Professor Erlin should teach him Latin and German; a Frenchman came every day to give him lessons in French; and the Frau Professor had recommended for mathematics an Englishman who was taking a philological degree at the University. This was a man named Wharton. Philip went to him every morning. He lived in one room on the top floor of a shabby house. It was dirty and untidy, and it was filled with a pungent odour made up of many different stinks. He was generally in bed when Philip arrived at ten o'clock, and he jumped out, put on a filthy dressing-gown and felt slippers, and, while he gave instruction, ate his simple breakfast. He was a short man, stout from excessive beer drinking, with a heavy moustache and long, unkempt hair. He had been in Germany for five years and was become very Teutonic. He spoke with scorn of Cambridge where he had taken his degree and with horror of the life which awaited him when, having taken his doctorate in Heidelberg, he must return to England and a pedagogic career. He adored the life of the German University with its happy freedom and its jolly companionships. He was a member of a *Burschenschaft,* and promised to take Philip to a *Kneipe.* He was very poor and made no secret that the lessons he was giving Philip meant the difference between meat for his dinner and bread and cheese. Sometimes after a heavy night he had such a headache that he could not drink his coffee, and he gave his lesson with heaviness of spirit. For these occasions he kept a few bottles of beer under the bed, and one of these and a pipe would help him to bear the burden of life.

"A hair of the dog that bit him," he would say as he poured out the beer, carefully so that the foam should not make him wait too long to drink.

Then he would talk to Philip of the University, the quarrels between rival corps, the duels, and the merits of this and that professor. Philip learnt more of life from him than of mathematics. Sometimes Wharton would sit back with a laugh and say:

"Look here, we've not done anything today. You needn't pay me for the lesson."

"Oh, it doesn't matter," said Philip.

This was something new and very interesting, and he felt that it was of greater import than trigonometry, which he never could understand. It was like a window on life that he had a chance of peeping through, and he looked with a wildly beating heart.

"No, you can keep your dirty money," said Wharton.

"But how about your dinner?" said Philip, with a smile, for he knew exactly how his master's finances stood.

Wharton had even asked him to pay him the two shillings which the lesson cost once a week rather than once a month, since it made things less complicated.

"Oh, never mind my dinner. It won't be the first time I've dined off a bottle of beer, and my mind's never clearer than when I do."

He dived under the bed (the sheets were gray with want of washing), and fished out another bottle. Philip, who was young and did not know the good things of life, refused to share it with him, so he drank alone.

"How long are you going to stay here?" asked Wharton.

Both he and Philip had given up with relief the pretence of mathematics.

"Oh, I don't know. I suppose about a year. Then my people want me to go to Oxford."

Wharton gave a contemptuous shrug of the shoulders. It was a new experience for Philip to learn that there were persons who did not look upon that seat of learning with awe.

"What d'you want to go there for? You'll only be a glorified school-boy. Why don't you matriculate here? A year's no good. Spend five years here. You know, there are two good things in life, freedom of thought and freedom of action. In France you get freedom of action: you can do what you like and nobody bothers, but you must think like everybody else. In Germany you must do what everybody else does, but you may think as

you choose. They're both very good things. I personally prefer freedom of thought. But in England you get neither: you're ground down by convention. You can't think as you like and you can't act as you like. That's because it's a democratic nation. I expect America's worse."

He leaned back cautiously, for the chair on which he sat had a ricketty leg, and it was disconcerting when a rhetorical flourish was interrupted by a sudden fall to the floor.

"I ought to go back to England this year, but if I can scrape together enough to keep body and soul on speaking terms I shall stay another twelve months. But then I shall have to go. And I must leave all this"—he waved his arm round the dirty garret, with its unmade bed, the clothes lying on the floor, a row of empty beer bottles against the wall, piles of unbound, ragged books in every corner—"for some provincial university where I shall try and get a chair of philology. And I shall play tennis and go to tea-parties." He interrupted himself and gave Philip, very neatly dressed, with a clean collar on and his hair well-brushed, a quizzical look. "And, my God! I shall have to wash."

Philip reddened, feeling his own spruceness an intolerable reproach; for of late he had begun to pay some attention to his toilet, and he had come out from England with a pretty selection of ties.

The summer came upon the country like a conqueror. Each day was beautiful. The sky had an arrogant blue which goaded the nerves like a spur. The green of the trees in the Anlage was violent and crude; and the houses, when the sun caught them, had a dazzling white which stimulated till it hurt. Sometimes on his way back from Wharton Philip would sit in the shade on one of the benches in the Anlage, enjoying the coolness and watching the patterns of light which the sun, shining through the leaves, made on the ground. His soul danced with delight as gaily as the sunbeams. He revelled in those moments of idleness stolen from his work. Sometimes he sauntered through the streets of the old town. He looked with awe at the students of the corps, their cheeks gashed and red, who swaggered about in their coloured caps. In the afternoons he wandered about the hills with the girls in the Frau Professor's house, and sometimes they went up the river and had tea in a leafy beer-garden. In the evenings they walked round and round the Stadtgarten, listening to the band.

Philip soon learned the various interests of the household. Fräulein Thekla, the professor's elder daughter, was engaged to

a man in England who had spent twelve months in the house to learn German, and their marriage was to take place at the end of the year. But the young man wrote that his father, an india-rubber merchant who lived in Slough, did not approve of the union, and Fräulein Thekla was often in tears. Sometimes she and her mother might be seen, with stern eyes and determined mouths, looking over the letters of the reluctant lover. Thekla painted in water colour, and occasionally she and Philip, with another of the girls to keep them company, would go out and paint little pictures. The pretty Fräulein Hedwig had amorous troubles too. She was the daughter of a merchant in Berlin and a dashing hussar had fallen in love with her, a *von* if you please; but his parents opposed a marriage with a person of her condition, and she had been sent to Heidelberg to forget him. She could never, never do this, and corresponded with him continually, and he was making every effort to induce an exasperating father to change his mind. She told all this to Philip with pretty sighs and becoming blushes, and showed him the photograph of the gay lieutenant. Philip liked her best of all the girls at the Frau Professor's, and on their walks always tried to get by her side. He blushed a great deal when the others chaffed him for his obvious preference. He made the first declaration in his life to Fräulein Hedwig, but unfortunately it was an accident, and it happened in this manner. In the evenings when they did not go out, the young women sang little songs in the green velvet drawing-room, while Fräulein Anna, who always made herself useful, industriously accompanied. Fräulein Hedwig's favourite song was called *Ich liebe dich*, I love you; and one evening after she had sung this, when Philip was standing with her on the balcony, looking at the stars, it occurred to him to make some remark about it. He began:

"*Ich liebe dich.*"

His German was halting, and he looked about for the word he wanted. The pause was infinitesimal, but before he could go on Fräulein Hedwig said:

"*Ach, Herr Carey, Sie müssen mir nicht du sagen*—you mustn't talk to me in the second person singular."

Philip felt himself grow hot all over, for he would never have dared to do anything so familiar, and he could think of nothing on earth to say. It would be ungallant to explain that he was not making an observation, but merely mentioning the title of a song.

"*Entschuldigen Sie,*" he said. "I beg your pardon."

"It does not matter," she whispered.

She smiled pleasantly, quietly took his hand and pressed it, then turned back into the drawing-room.

Next day he was so embarrassed that he could not speak to her, and in his shyness did all that was possible to avoid her. When he was asked to go for the usual walk he refused because, he said, he had work to do. But Fräulein Hedwig seized an opportunity to speak to him alone.

"Why are you behaving in this way?" she said kindly. "You know, I'm not angry with you for what you said last night. You can't help it if you love me. I'm flattered. But although I'm not exactly engaged to Hermann I can never love anyone else, and I look upon myself as his bride."

Philip blushed again, but he put on quite the expression of a rejected lover.

"I hope you'll be very happy," he said.

XXIV

Professor Erlin gave Philip a lesson every day. He made out a list of books which Philip was to read till he was ready for the final achievement of *Faust,* and meanwhile, ingeniously enough, started him on a German translation of one of the plays by Shakespeare which Philip had studied at school. It was the period in Germany of Goethe's highest fame. Notwithstanding his rather condescending attitude towards patriotism he had been adopted as the national poet, and seemed since the war of seventy to be one of the most significant glories of national unity. The enthusiastic seemed in the wildness of the *Walpurgisnacht* to hear the rattle of artillery at Gravelotte. But one mark of a writer's greatness is that different minds can find in him different inspirations; and Professor Erlin, who hated the Prussians, gave his enthusiastic admiration to Goethe because his works, Olympian and sedate, offered the only refuge for a sane mind against the onslaughts of the present generation. There was a dramatist whose name of late had been much heard at Heidelberg, and the winter before one of his plays had been given at the theatre amid the cheers of adherents and the hisses of decent people. Philip heard discussions about it at the Frau Professor's long table, and at these Professor Erlin lost his wonted calm: he beat the table with his fist, and drowned all opposition with the roar of his fine deep voice. It was nonsense and obscene nonsense. He forced himself to sit the play out, but he did not know whether he was more bored or nauseated. If that was what the theatre was coming to, then it was high time the police stepped in and closed the playhouses. He was no prude and could laugh as well as anyone at the witty immorality of a farce at the Palais Royal, but here was nothing but filth. With an emphatic gesture he held his nose and whistled through his teeth. It was the ruin of the family, the uprooting of morals, the destruction of Germany.

"*Aber, Adolf,*" said the Frau Professor from the other end of the table. "Calm yourself."

He shook his fist at her. He was the mildest of creatures and ventured upon no action of his life without consulting her.

"No, Helene, I tell you this," he shouted. "I would sooner my daughters were lying dead at my feet than see them listening to the garbage of that shameless fellow."

The play was *The Doll's House* and the author was Henrik Ibsen.

Professor Erlin classed him with Richard Wagner, but of him he spoke not with anger but with good-humoured laughter. He was a charlatan but a successful charlatan, and in that was always something for the comic spirit to rejoice in.

"*Verrückter Kerl!* A madman!" he said.

He had seen *Lohengrin* and that passed muster. It was dull but no worse. But *Siegfried!* When he mentioned it Professor Erlin leaned his head on his hand and bellowed with laughter. Not a melody in it from beginning to end! He could imagine Richard Wagner sitting in his box and laughing till his sides ached at the sight of all the people who were taking it seriously. It was the greatest hoax of the nineteenth century. He lifted his glass of beer to his lips, threw back his head, and drank till the glass was empty. Then wiping his mouth with the back of his hand, he said:

"I tell you young people that before the nineteenth century is out Wagner will be as dead as mutton. Wagner! I would give all his works for one opera by Donizetti."

XXV

THE oddest of Philip's masters was his teacher of French. Monsieur Ducroz was a citizen of Geneva. He was a tall old man, with a sallow skin and hollow cheeks; his gray hair was thin and long. He wore shabby black clothes, with holes at the elbows of his coat and frayed trousers. His linen was very dirty. Philip had never seen him in a clean collar. He was a man of few words, who gave his lesson conscientiously but without enthusiasm, arriving as the clock struck and leaving on the minute. His charges were very small. He was taciturn, and what Philip learnt about him he learnt from others: it appeared that he had fought with Garibaldi against the Pope, but had left Italy in disgust when it was clear that all his efforts for freedom, by which he meant the establishment of a republic, tended to no more than an exchange of yokes; he had been expelled from Geneva for it was not known what political offences. Philip looked upon him with puzzled surprise; for he was very unlike his idea of the revolutionary: he spoke in a low voice and was extraordinarily polite; he never sat down till he was asked to; and when on rare occasions he met Philip in the street took off his hat with an elaborate gesture; he never laughed, he never even smiled. A more complete imagination than Philip's might have pictured a youth of splendid hope, for he must have been entering upon manhood in 1848 when kings, remembering their brother of France, went about with an uneasy crick in their necks; and perhaps that passion for liberty which passed through Europe, sweeping before it what of absolutism and tyranny had reared its head during the reaction from the revolution of 1789, filled no breast with a hotter fire. One might fancy him, passionate with theories of human equality and human rights, discussing, arguing, fighting behind barricades in Paris, flying before the Austrian cavalry in Milan, imprisoned here, exiled from there, hoping on and upborne ever with the word which seemed so magical, the word Liberty; till at last, broken with disease and starvation, old, without means to keep body and soul together but such lessons as he could pick up from poor students, he found himself in that little neat town under the heel of a personal tyranny greater than any in Europe. Perhaps his taciturnity hid a contempt for the

human race which had abandoned the great dreams of his youth and now wallowed in sluggish ease; or perhaps these thirty years of revolution had taught him that men are unfit for liberty, and he thought that he had spent his life in the pursuit of that which was not worth the finding. Or maybe he was tired out and waited only with indifference for the release of death.

One day Philip, with the bluntness of his age, asked him if it was true he had been with Garibaldi. The old man did not seem to attach any importance to the question. He answered quite quietly in as low a voice as usual.

"*Oui, monsieur.*"

"They say you were in the Commune?"

"Do they? Shall we get on with our work?"

He held the book open and Philip, intimidated, began to translate the passage he had prepared.

One day Monsieur Ducroz seemed to be in great pain. He had been scarcely able to drag himself up the many stairs to Philip's room; and when he arrived sat down heavily, his sallow face drawn, with beads of sweat on his forehead, trying to recover himself.

"I'm afraid you're ill," said Philip.

"It's of no consequence."

But Philip saw that he was suffering, and at the end of the hour asked whether he would not prefer to give no more lessons till he was better.

"No," said the old man, in his even low voice. "I prefer to go on while I am able."

Philip, morbidly nervous when he had to make any reference to money, reddened.

"But it won't make any difference to you," he said. "I'll pay for the lessons just the same. If you wouldn't mind I'd like to give you the money for next week in advance."

Monsieur Ducroz charged eighteen pence an hour. Philip took a ten-mark piece out of his pocket and shyly put it on the table. He could not bring himself to offer it as if the old man were a beggar.

"In that case I think I won't come again till I'm better." He took the coin and, without anything more than the elaborate bow with which he always took his leave, went out.

"*Bonjour, monsieur.*"

Philip was vaguely disappointed. Thinking he had done a generous thing, he had expected that Monsieur Ducroz would overwhelm him with expressions of gratitude. He was taken aback

to find that the old teacher accepted the present as though it were his due. He was so young, he did not realise how much less is the sense of obligation in those who receive favours than in those who grant them. Monsieur Ducroz appeared again five or six days later. He tottered a little more and was very weak, but seemed to have overcome the severity of the attack. He was no more communicative than he had been before. He remained mysterious, aloof, and dirty. He made no reference to his illness till after the lesson; and then, just as he was leaving, at the door, which he held open, he paused. He hesitated, as though to speak were difficult.

"If it hadn't been for the money you gave me I should have starved. It was all I had to live on."

He made his solemn, obsequious bow, and went out. Philip felt a little lump in his throat. He seemed to realise in a fashion the hopeless bitterness of the old man's struggle, and how hard life was for him when to himself it was so pleasant.

XXVI

Philip had spent three months in Heidelberg when one morning the Frau Professor told him that an Englishman named Hayward was coming to stay in the house, and the same evening at supper he saw a new face. For some days the family had lived in a state of excitement. First, as the result of heaven knows what scheming, by dint of humble prayers and veiled threats, the parents of the young Englishman to whom Fräulein Thekla was engaged had invited her to visit them in England, and she had set off with an album of water colours to show how accomplished she was and a bundle of letters to prove how deeply the young man had compromised himself. A week later Fräulein Hedwig with radiant smiles announced that the lieutenant of her affections was coming to Heidelberg with his father and mother. Exhausted by the importunity of their son and touched by the dowry which Fräulein Hedwig's father offered, the lieutenant's parents had consented to pass through Heidelberg to make the young woman's acquaintance. The interview was satisfactory and Fräulein Hedwig had the satisfaction of showing her lover in the Stadtgarten to the whole of Frau Professor Erlin's household. The silent old ladies who sat at the top of the table near the Frau Professor were in a flutter, and when Fräulein Hedwig said she was to go home at once for the formal engagement to take place, the Frau Professor, regardless of expense, said she would give a *Maibowle*. Professor Erlin prided himself on his skill in preparing this mild intoxicant, and after supper the large bowl of hock and soda, with scented herbs floating in it and wild strawberries, was placed with solemnity on the round table in the drawing-room. Fräulein Anna teased Philip about the departure of his lady-love, and he felt very uncomfortable and rather melancholy. Fräulein Hedwig sang several songs, Fräulein Anna played the Wedding March, and the Professor sang *Die Wacht am Rhein*. Amid all this jollification Philip paid little attention to the new arrival. They had sat opposite one another at supper, but Philip was chattering busily with Fräulein Hedwig and the stranger, knowing no German, had eaten his food in silence. Philip, observing that he wore a pale blue tie, had on

that account taken a sudden dislike to him. He was a man of twenty-six, very fair, with long, wavy hair through which he passed his hand frequently with a careless gesture. His eyes were large and blue, but the blue was very pale, and they looked rather tired already. He was clean-shaven, and his mouth, notwithstanding its thin lips, was well-shaped. Fräulein Anna took an interest in physiognomy, and she made Philip notice afterwards how finely shaped was his skull, and how weak was the lower part of his face. The head, she remarked, was the head of a thinker, but the jaw lacked character. Fräulein Anna, foredoomed to a spinster's life, with her high cheek-bones and large misshapen nose, laid great stress upon character. While they talked of him he stood a little apart from the others, watching the noisy party with a good-humoured but faintly supercilious expression. He was tall and slim. He held himself with a deliberate grace. Weeks, one of the American students, seeing him alone, went up and began to talk to him. The pair were oddly contrasted: the American very neat in his black coat and pepper-and-salt trousers, thin and dried-up, with something of ecclesiastical unction already in his manner; and the Englishman in his loose tweed suit, large-limbed and slow of gesture.

Philip did not speak to the new-comer till next day. They found themselves alone on the balcony of the drawing-room before dinner. Hayward addressed him.

"You're English, aren't you?"

"Yes."

"Is the food always as bad as it was last night?"

"It's always about the same."

"Beastly, isn't it?"

"Beastly."

Philip had found nothing wrong with the food at all, and in fact had eaten it in large quantities with appetite and enjoyment, but he did not want to show himself a person of so little discrimination as to think a dinner good which another thought execrable.

Fräulein Thekla's visit to England made it necessary for her sister to do more in the house, and she could not often spare the time for long walks; and Fräulein Cäcilie, with her long plait of fair hair and her little snub-nosed face, had of late shown a certain disinclination for society. Fräulein Hedwig was gone, and Weeks, the American who generally accompanied them on their rambles, had set out for a tour of South Germany. Philip was left a good deal to himself. Hayward sought his acquaintance;

but Philip had an unfortunate trait: from shyness or from some atavistic inheritance of the cave-dweller, he always disliked people on first acquaintance; and it was not till he became used to them that he got over his first impression. It made him difficult of access. He received Hayward's advances very shyly, and when Hayward asked him one day to go for a walk he accepted only because he could not think of a civil excuse. He made his usual apology, angry with himself for the flushing cheeks he could not control, and trying to carry it off with a laugh.

"I'm afraid I can't walk very fast."

"Good heavens, I don't walk for a wager. I prefer to stroll. Don't you remember the chapter in *Marius* where Pater talks of the gentle exercise of walking as the best incentive to conversation?"

Philip was a good listener; though he often thought of clever things to say, it was seldom till after the opportunity to say them had passed; but Hayward was communicative; anyone more experienced than Philip might have thought he liked to hear himself talk. His supercilious attitude impressed Philip. He could not help admiring, and yet being awed by, a man who faintly despised so many things which Philip had looked upon as almost sacred. He cast down the fetish of exercise, damning with the contemptuous word pot-hunters all those who devoted themselves to its various forms; and Philip did not realise that he was merely putting up in its stead the other fetish of culture.

They wandered up to the castle, and sat on the terrace that overlooked the town. It nestled in the valley along the pleasant Neckar with a comfortable friendliness. The smoke from the chimneys hung over it, a pale blue haze; and the tall roofs, the spires of the churches, gave it a pleasantly mediæval air. There was a homeliness in it which warmed the heart. Hayward talked of *Richard Feverel* and *Madame Bovary,* of Verlaine, Dante, and Matthew Arnold. In those days Fitzgerald's translation of Omar Khyam was known only to the elect, and Hayward repeated it to Philip. He was very fond of reciting poetry, his own and that of others, which he did in a monotonous sing-song. By the time they reached home Philip's distrust of Hayward was changed to enthusiastic admiration.

They made a practice of walking together every afternoon, and Philip learned presently something of Hayward's circumstances. He was the son of a country judge, on whose death some time before he had inherited three hundred a year. His record at Charterhouse was so brilliant that when he went to Cambridge the

Master of Trinity Hall went out of his way to express his satisfaction that he was going to that college. He prepared himself for a distinguished career. He moved in the most intellectual circles; he read Browning with enthusiasm and turned up his well-shaped nose at Tennyson; he knew all the details of Shelley's treatment of Harriet; he dabbled in the history of art (on the walls of his rooms were reproductions of pictures by G. F. Watts, Burne-Jones, and Botticelli); and he wrote not without distinction verses of a pessimistic character. His friends told one another that he was a man of excellent gifts, and he listened to them willingly when they prophesied his future eminence. In course of time he became an authority on art and literature. He came under the influence of Newman's *Apologia;* the picturesqueness of the Roman Catholic faith appealed to his æsthetic sensibility; and it was only the fear of his father's wrath (a plain, blunt man of narrow ideas, who read Macaulay) which prevented him from 'going over.' When he only got a pass degree his friends were astonished; but he shrugged his shoulders and delicately insinuated that he was not the dupe of examiners. He made one feel that a first class was ever so slightly vulgar. He described one of the vivas with tolerant humour; some fellow in an outrageous collar was asking him questions in logic; it was infinitely tedious, and suddenly he noticed that he wore elastic-sided boots: it was grotesque and ridiculous; so he withdrew his mind and thought of the Gothic beauty of the Chapel at King's. But he had spent some delightful days at Cambridge; he had given better dinners than anyone he knew; and the conversation in his rooms had been often memorable. He quoted to Philip the exquisite epigram:

"They told me, Herakleitus, they told me you were dead."

And now, when he related again the picturesque little anecdote about the examiner and his boots, he laughed.

"Of course it was folly," he said, "but it was a folly in which there was something fine."

Philip, with a little thrill, thought it magnificent.

Then Hayward went to London to read for the bar. He had charming rooms in Clement's Inn, with panelled walls, and he tried to make them look like his old rooms at the Hall. He had ambitions that were vaguely political, he described himself as a Whig, and he was put up for a club which was of Liberal but gentlemanly flavour. His idea was to practise at the Bar (he chose the Chancery side as less brutal), and get a seat for some pleasant constituency as soon as the various promises made him

were carried out; meanwhile he went a great deal to the opera, and made acquaintance with a small number of charming people who admired the things that he admired. He joined a dining-club of which the motto was, The Whole, The Good, and The Beautiful. He formed a platonic friendship with a lady some years older than himself, who lived in Kensington Square; and nearly every afternoon he drank tea with her by the light of shaded candles, and talked of George Meredith and Walter Pater. It was notorious that any fool could pass the examinations of the Bar Council, and he pursued his studies in a dilatory fashion. When he was ploughed for his final he looked upon it as a personal affront. At the same time the lady in Kensington Square told him that her husband was coming home from India on leave, and was a man, though worthy in every way, of a commonplace mind, who would not understand a young man's frequent visits. Hayward felt that life was full of ugliness, his soul revolted from the thought of affronting again the cynicism of examiners, and he saw something rather splendid in kicking away the ball which lay at his feet. He was also a good deal in debt: it was difficult to live in London like a gentleman on three hundred a year; and his heart yearned for the Venice and Florence which John Ruskin had so magically described. He felt that he was unsuited to the vulgar bustle of the Bar, for he had discovered that it was not sufficient to put your name on a door to get briefs; and modern politics seemed to lack nobility. He felt himself a poet. He disposed of his rooms in Clement's Inn and went to Italy. He had spent a winter in Florence and a winter in Rome, and now was passing his second summer abroad in Germany so that he might read Goethe in the original.

Hayward had one gift which was very precious. He had a real feeling for literature, and he could impart his own passion with an admirable fluency. He could throw himself into sympathy with a writer and see all that was best in him, and then he could talk about him with understanding. Philip had read a great deal, but he had read without discrimination everything that he happened to come across, and it was very good for him now to meet someone who could guide his taste. He borrowed books from the small lending library which the town possessed and began reading all the wonderful things that Hayward spoke of. He did not read always with enjoyment but invariably with perseverance. He was eager for self-improvement. He felt himself very ignorant and very humble. By the end of August, when Weeks returned from South Germany, Philip was completely under

Hayward's influence. Hayward did not like Weeks. He deplored the American's black coat and pepper-and-salt trousers, and spoke with a scornful shrug of his New England conscience. Philip listened complacently to the abuse of a man who had gone out of his way to be kind to him, but when Weeks in his turn made disagreeable remarks about Hayward he lost his temper.

"Your new friend looks like a poet," said Weeks, with a thin smile on his careworn, bitter mouth.

"He is a poet."

"Did he tell you so? In America we should call him a pretty fair specimen of a waster."

"Well, we're not in America," said Philip frigidly.

"How old is he? Twenty-five? And he does nothing but stay in pensions and write poetry."

"You don't know him," said Philip hotly.

"Oh yes, I do: I've met a hundred and forty-seven of him."

Weeks' eyes twinkled, but Philip, who did not understand American humour, pursed his lips and looked severe. Weeks to Philip seemed a man of middle-age, but he was in point of fact little more than thirty. He had a long, thin body and the scholar's stoop; his head was large and ugly; he had pale scanty hair and an earthy skin; his thin mouth and thin, long nose, and the great protuberance of his frontal bones, gave him an uncouth look. He was cold and precise in his manner, a bloodless man, without passion; but he had a curious vein of frivolity which disconcerted the serious-minded among whom his instincts naturally threw him. He was studying theology in Heidelberg, but the other theological students of his own nationality looked upon him with suspicion. He was very unorthodox, which frightened them; and his freakish humour excited their disapproval.

"How can you have known a hundred and forty-seven of him?" asked Philip seriously.

"I've met him in the Latin Quarter in Paris, and I've met him in pensions in Berlin and Munich. He lives in small hotels in Perugia and Assisi. He stands by the dozen before the Botticellis in Florence, and he sits on all the benches of the Sistine Chapel in Rome. In Italy he drinks a little too much wine, and in Germany he drinks a great deal too much beer. He always admires the right thing whatever the right thing is, and one of these days he's going to write a great work. Think of it, there are a hundred and forty-seven great works reposing in the bosoms of a hundred and forty-seven great men, and the tragic thing is that not one

of those hundred and forty-seven great works will ever be written. And yet the world goes on."

Weeks spoke seriously, but his gray eyes twinkled a little at the end of his long speech, and Philip flushed when he saw that the American was making fun of him.

"You do talk rot," he said crossly.

XXVII

Weeks had two little rooms at the back of Frau Erlin's house, and one of them, arranged as a parlour, was comfortable enough for him to invite people to sit in. After supper, urged perhaps by the impish humour which was the despair of his friends in Cambridge, Mass., he often asked Philip and Hayward to come in for a chat. He received them with elaborate courtesy and insisted on their sitting in the only two comfortable chairs in the room. Though he did not drink himself, with a politeness of which Philip recognised the irony, he put a couple of bottles of beer at Hayward's elbow, and he insisted on lighting matches whenever in the heat of argument Hayward's pipe went out. At the beginning of their acquaintance Hayward, as a member of so celebrated a university, had adopted a patronising attitude towards Weeks, who was a graduate of Harvard; and when by chance the conversation turned upon the Greek tragedians, a subject upon which Hayward felt he spoke with authority, he had assumed the air that it was his part to give information rather than to exchange ideas. Weeks had listened politely, with smiling modesty, till Hayward finished; then he asked one or two insidious questions, so innocent in appearance that Hayward, not seeing into what a quandary they led him, answered blandly; Weeks made a courteous objection, then a correction of fact, after that a quotation from some little known Latin commentator, then a reference to a German authority; and the fact was disclosed that he was a scholar. With smiling ease, apologetically, Weeks tore to pieces all that Hayward had said; with elaborate civility he displayed the superficiality of his attainments. He mocked him with gentle irony. Philip could not help seeing that Hayward looked a perfect fool, and Hayward had not the sense to hold his tongue; in his irritation, his self-assurance undaunted, he attempted to argue: he made wild statements and Weeks amicably corrected them; he reasoned falsely and Weeks proved that he was absurd: Weeks confessed that he had taught Greek Literature at Harvard. Hayward gave a laugh of scorn.

"I might have known it. Of course you read Greek like a schoolmaster," he said. "I read it like a poet."

"And do you find it more poetic when you don't quite know

what it means? I thought it was only in revealed religion that a mistranslation improved the sense."

At last, having finished the beer, Hayward left Weeks' room hot and dishevelled; with an angry gesture he said to Philip:

"Of course the man's a pedant. He has no real feeling for beauty. Accuracy is the virtue of clerks. It's the spirit of the Greeks that we aim at. Weeks is like that fellow who went to hear Rubinstein and complained that he played false notes. False notes! What did they matter when he played divinely?"

Philip, not knowing how many incompetent people have found solace in these false notes, was much impressed.

Hayward could never resist the opportunity which Weeks offered him of regaining ground lost on a previous occasion, and Weeks was able with the greatest ease to draw him into a discussion. Though he could not help seeing how small his attainments were beside the American's, his British pertinacity, his wounded vanity (perhaps they are the same thing), would not allow him to give up the struggle. Hayward seemed to take a delight in displaying his ignorance, self-satisfaction, and wrongheadedness. Whenever Hayward said something which was illogical, Weeks in a few words would show the falseness of his reasoning, pause for a moment to enjoy his triumph, and then hurry on to another subject as though Christian charity impelled him to spare the vanquished foe. Philip tried sometimes to put in something to help his friend, and Weeks gently crushed him, but so kindly, differently from the way in which he answered Hayward, that even Philip, outrageously sensitive, could not feel hurt. Now and then, losing his calm as he felt himself more and more foolish, Hayward became abusive, and only the American's smiling politeness prevented the argument from degenerating into a quarrel. On these occasions when Hayward left Weeks' room he muttered angrily:

"Damned Yankee!"

That settled it. It was a perfect answer to an argument which had seemed unanswerable.

Though they began by discussing all manner of subjects in Weeks' little room eventually the conversation always turned to religion: the theological student took a professional interest in it, and Hayward welcomed a subject in which hard facts need not disconcert him; when feeling is the gauge you can snap your fingers at logic, and when your logic is weak that is very agreeable. Hayward found it difficult to explain his beliefs to Philip without a great flow of words; but it was clear (and this

fell in with Philip's idea of the natural order of things), that he had been brought up in the church by law established. Though he had now given up all idea of becoming a Roman Catholic, he still looked upon that communion with sympathy. He had much to say in its praise, and he compared favourably its gorgeous ceremonies with the simple services of the Church of England. He gave Philip Newman's *Apologia* to read, and Philip, finding it very dull, nevertheless read it to the end.

"Read it for its style, not for its matter," said Hayward.

He talked enthusiastically of the music at the Oratory, and said charming things about the connection between incense and the devotional spirit. Weeks listened to him with his frigid smile.

"You think it proves the truth of Roman Catholicism that John Henry Newman wrote good English and that Cardinal Manning has a picturesque appearance?"

Hayward hinted that he had gone through much trouble with his soul. For a year he had swum in a sea of darkness. He passed his fingers through his fair, waving hair and told them that he would not for five hundred pounds endure again those agonies of mind. Fortunately he had reached calm waters at last.

"But what *do* you believe?" asked Philip, who was never satisfied with vague statements.

"I believe in the Whole, the Good, and the Beautiful."

Hayward with his loose large limbs and the fine carriage of his head looked very handsome when he said this, and he said it with an air.

"Is that how you would describe your religion in a census paper?" asked Weeks, in mild tones.

"I hate the rigid definition: it's so ugly, so obvious. If you like I will say that I believe in the church of the Duke of Wellington and Mr. Gladstone."

"That's the Church of England," said Philip.

"Oh wise young man!" retorted Hayward, with a smile which made Philip blush, for he felt that in putting into plain words what the other had expressed in a paraphrase, he had been guilty of vulgarity. "I belong to the Church of England. But I love the gold and the silk which clothe the priest of Rome, and his celibacy, and the confessional, and purgatory; and in the darkness of an Italian cathedral, incense-laden and mysterious, I believe with all my heart in the miracle of the Mass. In Venice I have seen a fisherwoman come in, barefoot, throw down her basket of fish by her side, fall on her knees, and pray to the Madonna;

and that I felt was the real faith, and I prayed and believed with her. But I believe also in Aphrodite and Apollo and the Great God Pan."

He had a charming voice, and he chose his words as he spoke; he uttered them almost rhythmically. He would have gone on, but Weeks opened a second bottle of beer.

"Let me give you something to drink."

Hayward turned to Philip with the slightly condescending gesture which so impressed the youth.

"Now are you satisfied?" he asked.

Philip, somewhat bewildered, confessed that he was.

"I'm disappointed that you didn't add a little Buddhism," said Weeks. "And I confess I have a sort of sympathy for Mahomet, I regret that you should have left him out in the cold."

Hayward laughed, for he was in a good humour with himself that evening, and the ring of his sentences still sounded pleasant in his ears. He emptied his glass.

"I didn't expect you to understand me," he answered. "With your cold American intelligence you can only adopt the critical attitude. Emerson and all that sort of thing. But what is criticism? Criticism is purely destructive; anyone can destroy, but not everyone can build up. You are a pedant, my dear fellow. The important thing is to construct: I am constructive; I am a poet."

Weeks looked at him with eyes which seemed at the same time to be quite grave and yet to be smiling brightly.

"I think, if you don't mind my saying so, you're a little drunk."

"Nothing to speak of," answered Hayward cheerfully. "And not enough for me to be unable to overwhelm you in argument. But come, I have unbosomed my soul; now tell us what your religion is."

Weeks put his head on one side so that he looked like a sparrow on a perch.

"I've been trying to find that out for years. I think I'm a Unitarian."

"But that's a dissenter," said Philip.

He could not imagine why they both burst into laughter, Hayward uproariously, and Weeks with a funny chuckle.

"And in England dissenters aren't gentlemen, are they?" asked Weeks.

"Well, if you ask me point-blank, they're not," replied Philip rather crossly.

He hated being laughed at, and they laughed again.

"And will you tell me what a gentleman is?" asked Weeks.

"Oh, I don't know; everyone knows what it is."

"Are you a gentleman?"

No doubt had ever crossed Philip's mind on the subject, but he knew it was not a thing to state of oneself.

"If a man tells you he's a gentleman you can bet your boots he isn't," he retorted.

"Am I a gentleman?"

Philip's truthfulness made it difficult for him to answer, but he was naturally polite.

"Oh, well, you're different," he said. "You're American, aren't you?"

"I suppose we may take it that only Englishmen are gentlemen," said Weeks gravely.

Philip did not contradict him.

"Couldn't you give me a few more particulars?" asked Weeks.

Philip reddened, but, growing angry, did not care if he made himself ridiculous.

"I can give you plenty." He remembered his uncle's saying that it took three generations to make a gentleman: it was a companion proverb to the silk purse and the sow's ear. "First of all he's the son of a gentleman, and he's been to a public school, and to Oxford or Cambridge."

"Edinburgh wouldn't do, I suppose?" asked Weeks.

"And he talks English like a gentleman, and he wears the right sort of things, and if he's a gentleman he can always tell if another chap's a gentleman."

It seemed rather lame to Philip as he went on, but there it was: that was what he meant by the word, and everyone he had ever known had meant that too.

"It is evident to me that I am not a gentleman," said Weeks. "I don't see why you should have been so surprised because I was a dissenter."

"I don't quite know what a Unitarian is," said Philip.

Weeks in his odd way again put his head on one side: you almost expected him to twitter.

"A Unitarian very earnestly disbelieves in almost everything that anybody else believes, and he has a very lively sustaining faith in he doesn't quite know what."

"I don't see why you should make fun of me," said Philip. "I really want to know."

"My dear friend, I'm not making fun of you. I have arrived

at that definition after years of great labour and the most anxious, nerve-racking study."

When Philip and Hayward got up to go, Weeks handed Philip a little book in a paper cover.

"I suppose you can read French pretty well by now. I wonder if this would amuse you."

Philip thanked him and, taking the book, looked at the title. It was Renan's *Vie de Jésus*.

XXVIII

It occurred neither to Hayward nor to Weeks that the conversations which helped them to pass an idle evening were being turned over afterwards in Philip's active brain. It had never struck him before that religion was a matter upon which discussion was possible. To him it meant the Church of England, and not to believe in its tenets was a sign of wilfulness which could not fail of punishment here or hereafter. There was some doubt in his mind about the chastisement of unbelievers. It was possible that a merciful judge, reserving the flames of hell for the heathen—Mahommedans, Buddhists, and the rest—would spare Dissenters and Roman Catholics (though at the cost of how much humiliation when they were made to realise their error!), and it was also possible that He would be pitiful to those who had had no chance of learning the truth,—this was reasonable enough, though such were the activities of the Missionary Society there could not be many in this condition—but if the chance had been theirs and they had neglected it (in which category were obviously Roman Catholics and Dissenters), the punishment was sure and merited. It was clear that the miscreant was in a parlous state. Perhaps Philip had not been taught it in so many words, but certainly the impression had been given him that only members of the Church of England had any real hope of eternal happiness.

One of the things that Philip had heard definitely stated was that the unbeliever was a wicked and a vicious man; but Weeks, though he believed in hardly anything that Philip believed, led a life of Christian purity. Philip had received little kindness in his life, and he was touched by the American's desire to help him: once when a cold kept him in bed for three days, Weeks nursed him like a mother. There was neither vice nor wickedness in him, but only sincerity and loving-kindness. It was evidently possible to be virtuous and unbelieving.

Also Philip had been given to understand that people adhered to other faiths only from obstinacy or self-interest: in their hearts they knew they were false; they deliberately sought to deceive others. Now, for the sake of his German he had been accustomed on Sunday mornings to attend the Lutheran service, but when Hayward arrived he began instead to go with him to Mass. He noticed that, whereas the protestant church was nearly empty

and the congregation had a listless air, the Jesuit on the other hand was crowded and the worshippers seemed to pray with all their hearts. They had not the look of hypocrites. He was surprised at the contrast; for he knew of course that the Lutherans, whose faith was closer to that of the Church of England, on that account were nearer the truth than the Roman Catholics. Most of the men—it was largely a masculine congregation—were South Germans; and he could not help saying to himself that if he had been born in South Germany he would certainly have been a Roman Catholic. He might just as well have been born in a Roman Catholic country as in England; and in England as well in a Wesleyan, Baptist, or Methodist family as in one that fortunately belonged to the church by law established. He was a little breathless at the danger he had run. Philip was on friendly terms with the little Chinaman who sat at table with him twice each day. His name was Sung. He was always smiling, affable, and polite. It seemed strange that he should frizzle in hell merely because he was a Chinaman; but if salvation was possible whatever a man's faith was, there did not seem to be any particular advantage in belonging to the Church of England.

Philip, more puzzled than he had ever been in his life, sounded Weeks. He had to be careful, for he was very sensitive to ridicule; and the acidulous humour with which the American treated the Church of England disconcerted him. Weeks only puzzled him more. He made Philip acknowledge that those South Germans whom he saw in the Jesuit church were every bit as firmly convinced of the truth of Roman Catholicism as he was of that of the Church of England, and from that he led him to admit that the Mahommedan and the Buddhist were convinced also of the truth of their respective religions. It looked as though knowing that you were right meant nothing; they all knew they were right. Weeks had no intention of undermining the boy's faith, but he was deeply interested in religion, and found it an absorbing topic of conversation. He had described his own views accurately when he said that he very earnestly disbelieved in almost everything that other people believed. Once Philip asked him a question, which he had heard his uncle put when the conversation at the vicarage had fallen upon some mildly rationalistic work which was then exciting discussion in the newspapers.

"But why should you be right and all those fellows like St. Anselm and St. Augustine be wrong?"

"You mean that they were very clever and learned men, while you have grave doubts whether I am either?" asked Weeks.

"Yes," answered Philip uncertainly, for put in that way his question seemed impertinent.

"St. Augustine believed that the earth was flat and that the sun turned round it."

"I don't know what that proves."

"Why, it proves that you believe with your generation. Your saints lived in an age of faith, when it was practically impossible to disbelieve what to us is positively incredible."

"Then how d'you know that we have the truth now?"

"I don't."

Philip thought this over for a moment, then he said:

"I don't see why the things we believe absolutely now shouldn't be just as wrong as what they believed in the past."

"Neither do I."

"Then how can you believe anything at all?"

"I don't know."

Philip asked Weeks what he thought of Hayward's religion.

"Men have always formed gods in their own image," said Weeks. "He believes in the picturesque."

Philip paused for a little while, then he said:

"I don't see why one should believe in God at all."

The words were no sooner out of his mouth than he realised that he had ceased to do so. It took his breath away like a plunge into cold water. He looked at Weeks with startled eyes. Suddenly he felt afraid. He left Weeks as quickly as he could. He wanted to be alone. It was the most startling experience that he had ever had. He tried to think it all out; it was very exciting, since his whole life seemed concerned (he thought his decision on this matter must profoundly affect its course) and a mistake might lead to eternal damnation; but the more he reflected the more convinced he was; and though during the next few weeks he read books, aids to scepticism, with eager interest it was only to confirm him in what he felt instinctively. The fact was that he had ceased to believe not for this reason or the other, but because he had not the religious temperament. Faith had been forced upon him from the outside. It was a matter of environment and example. A new environment and a new example gave him the opportunity to find himself. He put off the faith of his childhood quite simply, like a cloak that he no longer needed. At first life seemed strange and lonely without the belief which, though he never realised it, had been an unfailing support. He felt like a man who has leaned on a stick and finds himself forced suddenly to walk without assistance.

It really seemed as though the days were colder and the nights more solitary. But he was upheld by the excitement; it seemed to make life a more thrilling adventure; and in a little while the stick which he had thrown aside, the cloak which had fallen from his shoulders, seemed an intolerable burden of which he had been eased. The religious exercises which for so many years had been forced upon him were part and parcel of religion to him. He thought of the collects and epistles which he had been made to learn by heart, and the long services at the Cathedral through which he had sat when every limb itched with the desire for movement; and he remembered those walks at night through muddy roads to the parish church at Blackstable, and the coldness of that bleak building; he sat with his feet like ice, his fingers numb and heavy, and all around was the sickly odour of pomatum. Oh, he had been so bored! His heart leaped when he saw he was free from all that.

He was surprised at himself because he ceased to believe so easily, and, not knowing that he felt as he did on account of the subtle workings of his inmost nature, he ascribed the certainty he had reached to his own cleverness. He was unduly pleased with himself. With youth's lack of sympathy for an attitude other than its own he despised not a little Weeks and Hayward because they were content with the vague emotion which they called God and would not take the further step which to himself seemed so obvious. One day he went alone up a certain hill so that he might see a view which, he knew not why, filled him always with wild exhilaration. It was autumn now, but often the days were cloudless still, and then the sky seemed to glow with a more splendid light: it was as though nature consciously sought to put a fuller vehemence into the remaining days of fair weather. He looked down upon the plain, a-quiver with the sun, stretching vastly before him: in the distance were the roofs of Mannheim and ever so far away the dimness of Worms. Here and there a more piercing glitter was the Rhine. The tremendous spaciousness of it was glowing with rich gold. Philip, as he stood there, his heart beating with sheer joy, thought how the tempter had stood with Jesus on a high mountain and shown him the kingdoms of the earth. To Philip, intoxicated with the beauty of the scene, it seemed that it was the whole world which was spread before him, and he was eager to step down and enjoy it. He was free from degrading fears and free from prejudice. He could go his way without the intolerable dread of hell-fire. Suddenly he realised that he had lost also that burden of responsibility which

made every action of his life a matter of urgent consequence. He could breathe more freely in a lighter air. He was responsible only to himself for the things he did. Freedom! He was his own master at last. From old habit, unconsciously he thanked God that he no longer believed in Him.

Drunk with pride in his intelligence and in his fearlessness, Philip entered deliberately upon a new life. But his loss of faith made less difference in his behaviour than he expected. Though he had thrown on one side the Christian dogmas it never occurred to him to criticise the Christian ethics; he accepted the Christian virtues, and indeed thought it fine to practise them for their own sake, without a thought of reward or punishment. There was small occasion for heroism in the Frau Professor's house, but he was a little more exactly truthful than he had been, and he forced himself to be more than commonly attentive to the dull, elderly ladies who sometimes engaged him in conversation. The gentle oath, the violent adjective, which are typical of our language and which he had cultivated before as a sign of manliness, he now elaborately eschewed.

Having settled the whole matter to his satisfaction he sought to put it out of his mind, but that was more easily said than done; and he could not prevent the regrets nor stifle the misgivings which sometimes tormented him. He was so young and had so few friends that immortality had no particular attractions for him, and he was able without trouble to give up belief in it; but there was one thing which made him wretched; he told himself that he was unreasonable, he tried to laugh himself out of such pathos; but the tears really came to his eyes when he thought that he would never see again the beautiful mother whose love for him had grown more precious as the years since her death passed on. And sometimes, as though the influence of innumerable ancestors, God-fearing and devout, were working in him unconsciously, there seized him a panic fear that perhaps after all it was all true, and there was, up there behind the blue sky, a jealous God who would punish in everlasting flames the atheist. At these times his reason could offer him no help, he imagined the anguish of a physical torment which would last endlessly, he felt quite sick with fear and burst into a violent sweat. At last he would say to himself desperately:

"After all, it's not my fault. I can't force myself to believe. If there is a God after all and he punishes me because I honestly don't believe in Him I can't help it."

XXIX

WINTER set in. Weeks went to Berlin to attend the lectures of Paulssen, and Hayward began to think of going South. The local theatre opened its doors. Philip and Hayward went to it two or three times a week with the praiseworthy intention of improving their German, and Philip found it a more diverting manner of perfecting himself in the language than listening to sermons. They found themselves in the midst of a revival of the drama. Several of Ibsen's plays were on the repertory for the winter; Sudermann's *Die Ehre* was then a new play, and on its production in the quiet university town caused the greatest excitement; it was extravagantly praised and bitterly attacked; other dramatists followed with plays written under the modern influence, and Philip witnessed a series of works in which the vileness of mankind was displayed before him. He had never been to a play in his life till then (poor touring companies sometimes came to the Assembly Rooms at Blackstable, but the Vicar, partly on account of his profession, partly because he thought it would be vulgar, never went to see them) and the passion of the stage seized him. He felt a thrill the moment he got into the little, shabby, ill-lit theatre. Soon he came to know the peculiarities of the small company, and by the casting could tell at once what were the characteristics of the persons in the drama; but this made no difference to him. To him it was real life. It was a strange life, dark and tortured, in which men and women showed to remorseless eyes the evil that was in their hearts: a fair face concealed a depraved mind; the virtuous used virtue as a mask to hide their secret vice, the seeming-strong fainted within with their weakness; the honest were corrupt, the chaste were lewd. You seemed to dwell in a room where the night before an orgy had taken place: the windows had not been opened in the morning; the air was foul with the dregs of beer, and stale smoke, and flaring gas. There was no laughter. At most you sniggered at the hypocrite or the fool: the characters expressed themselves in cruel words that seemed wrung out of their hearts by shame and anguish.

Philip was carried away by the sordid intensity of it. He seemed to see the world again in another fashion, and this world too he was anxious to know. After the play was over he went to

a tavern and sat in the bright warmth with Hayward to eat a sandwich and drink a glass of beer. All round were little groups of students, talking and laughing; and here and there was a family, father and mother, a couple of sons and a girl; and sometimes the girl said a sharp thing, and the father leaned back in his chair and laughed, laughed heartily. It was very friendly and innocent. There was a pleasant homeliness in the scene, but for this Philip had no eyes. His thoughts ran on the play he had just come from.

"You do feel it's life, don't you?" he said excitedly. "You know, I don't think I can stay here much longer. I want to get to London so that I can really begin. I want to have experiences. I'm so tired of preparing for life: I want to live it now."

Sometimes Hayward left Philip to go home by himself. He would never exactly reply to Philip's eager questioning, but with a merry, rather stupid laugh, hinted at a romantic amour; he quoted a few lines of Rossetti, and once showed Philip a sonnet in which passion and purple, pessimism and pathos, were packed together on the subject of a young lady called Trude. Hayward surrounded his sordid and vulgar little adventures with a glow of poetry, and thought he touched hands with Pericles and Pheidias because to describe the object of his attentions he used the word *hetaira* instead of one of those, more blunt and apt, provided by the English language. Philip in the daytime had been led by curiosity to pass through the little street near the old bridge, with its neat white houses and green shutters, in which according to Hayward the Fräulein Trude lived; but the women, with brutal faces and painted cheeks, who came out of their doors and cried out to him, filled him with fear; and he fled in horror from the rough hands that sought to detain him. He yearned above all things for experience and felt himself ridiculous because at his age he had not enjoyed that which all fiction taught him was the most important thing in life; but he had the unfortunate gift of seeing things as they were, and the reality which was offered him differed too terribly from the ideal of his dreams.

He did not know how wide a country, arid and precipitous, must be crossed before the traveller through life comes to an acceptance of reality. It is an illusion that youth is happy, an illusion of those who have lost it; but the young know they are wretched, for they are full of the truthless ideals which have been instilled into them, and each time they come in contact with the real they are bruised and wounded. It looks as if they were

victims of a conspiracy; for the books they read, ideal by the necessity of selection, and the conversation of their elders, who look back upon the past through a rosy haze of forgetfulness, prepare them for an unreal life. They must discover for themselves that all they have read and all they have been told are lies, lies, lies; and each discovery is another nail driven into the body on the cross of life. The strange thing is that each one who has gone through that bitter disillusionment adds to it in his turn, unconsciously, by the power within him which is stronger than himself. The companionship of Hayward was the worst possible thing for Philip. He was a man who saw nothing for himself, but only through a literary atmosphere, and he was dangerous because he had deceived himself into sincerity. He honestly mistook his sensuality for romantic emotion, his vacillation for the artistic temperament, and his idleness for philosophic calm. His mind, vulgar in its effort at refinement, saw everything a little larger than life size, with the outlines blurred, in a golden mist of sentimentality. He lied and never knew that he lied, and when it was pointed out to him said that lies were beautiful. He was an idealist.

XXX

Philip was restless and dissatisfied. Hayward's poetic allusions troubled his imagination, and his soul yearned for romance. At least that was how he put it to himself.

And it happened that an incident was taking place in Frau Erlin's house which increased Philip's preoccupation with the matter of sex. Two or three times on his walks among the hills he had met Fräulein Cäcilie wandering by herself. He had passed her with a bow, and a few yards further on had seen the Chinaman. He thought nothing of it; but one evening on his way home, when night had already fallen, he passed two people walking very close together. Hearing his footstep, they separated quickly, and though he could not see well in the darkness he was almost certain they were Cäcilie and Herr Sung. Their rapid movement apart suggested that they had been walking arm in arm. Philip was puzzled and surprised. He had never paid much attention to Fräulein Cäcilie. She was a plain girl, with a square face and blunt features. She could not have been more than sixteen, since she still wore her long fair hair in a plait. That evening at supper he looked at her curiously; and, though of late she had talked little at meals, she addressed him.

"Where did you go for your walk today, Herr Carey?" she asked.

"Oh, I walked up towards the Königstuhl."

"I didn't go out," she volunteered. "I had a headache."

The Chinaman, who sat next to her, turned round.

"I'm so sorry," he said. "I hope it's better now."

Fräulein Cäcilie was evidently uneasy, for she spoke again to Philip.

"Did you meet many people on the way?"

Philip could not help reddening when he told a downright lie.

"No. I don't think I saw a living soul."

He fancied that a look of relief passed across her eyes.

Soon, however, there could be no doubt that there was something between the pair, and other people in the Frau Professor's house saw them lurking in dark places. The elderly ladies who sat at the head of the table began to discuss what was now a scandal. The Frau Professor was angry and harassed. She had done her

best to see nothing. The winter was at hand, and it was not as easy a matter then as in the summer to keep her house full. Herr Sung was a good customer: he had two rooms on the ground floor, and he drank a bottle of Moselle at each meal. The Frau Professor charged him three marks a bottle and made a good profit. None of her other guests drank wine, and some of them did not even drink beer. Neither did she wish to lose Fräulein Cäcilie, whose parents were in business in South America and paid well for the Frau Professor's motherly care; and she knew that if she wrote to the girl's uncle, who lived in Berlin, he would immediately take her away. The Frau Professor contented herself with giving them both severe looks at table and, though she dared not be rude to the Chinaman, got a certain satisfaction out of incivility to Cäcilie. But the three elderly ladies were not content. Two were widows, and one, a Dutchwoman, was a spinster of masculine appearance; they paid the smallest possible sum for their pension, and gave a good deal of trouble, but they were permanent and therefore had to be put up with. They went to the Frau Professor and said that something must be done; it was disgraceful, and the house was ceasing to be respectable. The Frau Professor tried obstinacy, anger, tears, but the three old ladies routed her, and with a sudden assumption of virtuous indignation she said that she would put a stop to the whole thing.

After luncheon she took Cäcilie into her bed-room and began to talk very seriously to her; but to her amazement the girl adopted a brazen attitude; she proposed to go about as she liked; and if she chose to walk with the Chinaman she could not see it was anybody's business but her own. The Frau Professor threatened to write to her uncle.

"Then Onkel Heinrich will put me in a family in Berlin for the winter, and that will be much nicer for me. And Herr Sung will come to Berlin too."

The Frau Professor began to cry. The tears rolled down her coarse, red, fat cheeks; and Cäcilie laughed at her.

"That will mean three rooms empty all through the winter," she said.

Then the Frau Professor tried another plan. She appealed to Fräulein Cäcilie's better nature: she was kind, sensible, tolerant; she treated her no longer as a child, but as a grown woman. She said that it wouldn't be so dreadful, but a Chinaman, with his yellow skin and flat nose, and his little pig's eyes! That's what made it so horrible. It filled one with disgust to think of it.

"*Bitte, bitte,*" said Cäcilie, with a rapid intake of the breath, "I won't listen to anything against him."

"But it's not serious?" gasped Frau Erlin.

"I love him. I love him. I love him."

"*Gott im Himmel!*"

The Frau Professor stared at her with horrified surprise; she had thought it was no more than naughtiness on the child's part, and innocent folly; but the passion in her voice revealed everything. Cäcilie looked at her for a moment with flaming eyes, and then with a shrug of her shoulders went out of the room.

Frau Erlin kept the details of the interview to herself, and a day or two later altered the arrangement of the table. She asked Herr Sung if he would not come and sit at her end, and he with his unfailing politeness accepted with alacrity. Cäcilie took the change indifferently. But as if the discovery that the relations between them were known to the whole household made them more shameless, they made no secret now of their walks together, and every afternoon quite openly set out to wander about the hills. It was plain that they did not care what was said of them. At last even the placidity of Professor Erlin was moved, and he insisted that his wife should speak to the Chinaman. She took him aside in his turn and expostulated; he was ruining the girl's reputation, he was doing harm to the house, he must see how wrong and wicked his conduct was; but she was met with smiling denials; Herr Sung did not know what she was talking about, he was not paying any attention to Fräulein Cäcilie, he never walked with her; it was all untrue, every word of it.

"*Ach,* Herr Sung, how can you say such things? You've been seen again and again."

"No, you're mistaken. It's untrue."

He looked at her with an unceasing smile, which showed his even, little white teeth. He was quite calm. He denied everything. He denied with bland effrontery. At last the Frau Professor lost her temper and said the girl had confessed she loved him. He was not moved. He continued to smile.

"Nonsense! Nonsense! It's all untrue."

She could get nothing out of him. The weather grew very bad; there was snow and frost, and then a thaw with a long succession of cheerless days, on which walking was a poor amusement. One evening when Philip had just finished his German lesson with the Herr Professor and was standing for a moment in the drawing-room, talking to Frau Erlin, Anna came quickly in.

"Mamma, where is Cäcilie?" she said.

"I suppose she's in her room."

"There's no light in it."

The Frau Professor gave an exclamation, and she looked at her daughter in dismay. The thought which was in Anna's head had flashed across hers.

"Ring for Emil," she said hoarsely.

This was the stupid lout who waited at table and did most of the housework. He came in.

"Emil, go down to Herr Sung's room and enter without knocking. If anyone is there say you came in to see about the stove."

No sign of astonishment appeared on Emil's phlegmatic face.

He went slowly downstairs. The Frau Professor and Anna left the door open and listened. Presently they heard Emil come up again, and they called him.

"Was any one there?" asked the Frau Professor.

"Yes, Herr Sung was there."

"Was he alone?"

The beginning of a cunning smile narrowed his mouth.

"No, Fräulein Cäcilie was there."

"Oh, it's disgraceful," cried the Frau Professor.

Now he smiled broadly.

"Fräulein Cäcilie is there every evening. She spends hours at a time there."

Frau Professor began to wring her hands.

"Oh, how abominable! But why didn't you tell me?"

"It was no business of mine," he answered, slowly shrugging his shoulders.

"I suppose they paid you well. Go away. Go."

He lurched clumsily to the door.

"They must go away, mamma," said Anna.

"And who is going to pay the rent? And the taxes are falling due. It's all very well for you to say they must go away. If they go away I can't pay the bills." She turned to Philip, with tears streaming down her face. "*Ach*, Herr Carey, you will not say what you have heard. If Fräulein Förster—" this was the Dutch spinster—"if Fräulein Förster knew she would leave at once. And if they all go we must close the house. I cannot afford to keep it."

"Of course I won't say anything."

"If she stays, I will not speak to her," said Anna.

That evening at supper Fräulein Cäcilie, redder than usual, with a look of obstinacy on her face, took her place punctually; but Herr Sung did not appear, and for a while Philip thought

he was going to shirk the ordeal. At last he came, very smiling, his little eyes dancing with the apologies he made for his late arrival. He insisted as usual on pouring out the Frau Professor a glass of his Moselle, and he offered a glass to Fräulein Förster. The room was very hot, for the stove had been alight all day and the windows were seldom opened. Emil blundered about, but succeeded somehow in serving everyone quickly and with order. The three old ladies sat in silence, visibly disapproving: the Frau Professor had scarcely recovered from her tears; her husband was silent and oppressed. Conversation languished. It seemed to Philip that there was something dreadful in that gathering which he had sat with so often; they looked different under the light of the two hanging lamps from what they had ever looked before; he was vaguely uneasy. Once he caught Cäcilie's eye, and he thought she looked at him with hatred and contempt. The room was stifling. It was as though the beastly passion of that pair troubled them all; there was a feeling of Oriental depravity; a faint savour of joss-sticks, a mystery of hidden vices, seemed to make their breath heavy. Philip could feel the beating of the arteries in his forehead. He could not understand what strange emotion distracted him; he seemed to feel something infinitely attractive, and yet he was repelled and horrified.

For several days things went on. The air was sickly with the unnatural passion which all felt about them, and the nerves of the little household seemed to grow exasperated. Only Herr Sung remained unaffected; he was no less smiling, affable, and polite than he had been before: one could not tell whether his manner was a triumph of civilisation or an expression of contempt on the part of the Oriental for the vanquished West. Cäcilie was flaunting and cynical. At last even the Frau Professor could bear the position no longer. Suddenly panic seized her; for Professor Erlin with brutal frankness had suggested the possible consequences of an intrigue which was now manifest to everyone, and she saw her good name in Heidelberg and the repute of her house ruined by a scandal which could not possibly be hidden. For some reason, blinded perhaps by her interests, this possibility had never occurred to her; and now, her wits muddled by a terrible fear, she could hardly be prevented from turning the girl out of the house at once. It was due to Anna's good sense that a cautious letter was written to the uncle in Berlin suggesting that Cäcilie should be taken away.

But having made up her mind to lose the two lodgers, the Frau Professor could not resist the satisfaction of giving rein to the

ill-temper she had curbed so long. She was free now to say anything she liked to Cäcilie.

"I have written to your uncle, Cäcilie, to take you away. I cannot have you in my house any longer."

Her little round eyes sparkled when she noticed the sudden whiteness of the girl's face.

"You're shameless. Shameless," she went on.

She called her foul names.

"What did you say to my uncle Heinrich, Frau Professor?" the girl asked, suddenly falling from her attitude of flaunting independence.

"Oh, he'll tell you himself. I expect to get a letter from him tomorrow."

Next day, in order to make the humiliation more public, at supper she called down the table to Cäcilie.

"I have had a letter from your uncle, Cäcilie. You are to pack your things tonight, and we will put you in the train tomorrow morning. He will meet you himself in Berlin at the Central Bahnhof."

"Very good, Frau Professor."

Herr Sung smiled in the Frau Professor's eyes, and notwithstanding her protests insisted on pouring out a glass of wine for her. The Frau Professor ate her supper with a good appetite. But she had triumphed unwisely. Just before going to bed she called the servant.

"Emil, if Fräulein Cäcilie's box is ready you had better take it downstairs tonight. The porter will fetch it before breakfast."

The servant went away and in a moment came back.

"Fräulein Cäcilie is not in her room, and her bag has gone."

With a cry the Frau Professor hurried along: the box was on the floor, strapped and locked; but there was no bag, and neither hat nor cloak. The dressing-table was empty. Breathing heavily, the Frau Professor ran downstairs to the Chinaman's rooms, she had not moved so quickly for twenty years, and Emil called out after her to beware she did not fall; she did not trouble to knock, but burst in. The rooms were empty. The luggage had gone, and the door into the garden, still open, showed how it had been got away. In an envelope on the table were notes for the money due on the month's board and an approximate sum for extras. Groaning, suddenly overcome by her haste, the Frau Professor sank obesely on to a sofa. There could be no doubt. The pair had gone off together. Emil remained stolid and unmoved.

XXXI

Hayward, after saying for a month that he was going South next day and delaying from week to week out of inability to make up his mind to the bother of packing and the tedium of a journey, had at last been driven off just before Christmas by the preparations for that festival. He could not support the thought of a Teutonic merry-making. It gave him goose-flesh to think of the season's aggressive cheerfulness, and in his desire to avoid the obvious he determined to travel on Christmas Eve.

Philip was not sorry to see him off, for he was a downright person and it irritated him that anybody should not know his own mind. Though much under Hayward's influence, he would not grant that indecision pointed to a charming sensitiveness; and he resented the shadow of a sneer with which Hayward looked upon his straight ways. They corresponded. Hayward was an admirable letter-writer, and knowing his talent took pains with his letters. His temperament was receptive to the beautiful influences with which he came in contact, and he was able in his letters from Rome to put a subtle fragrance of Italy. He thought the city of the ancient Romans a little vulgar, finding distinction only in the decadence of the Empire; but the Rome of the Popes appealed to his sympathy, and in his chosen words, quite exquisitely, there appeared a Rococo beauty. He wrote of old church music and the Alban Hills, and of the languor of incense and the charm of the streets by night, in the rain, when the pavements shone and the light of the street lamps was mysterious. Perhaps he repeated these admirable letters to various friends. He did not know what a troubling effect they had upon Philip; they seemed to make his life very humdrum. With the spring Hayward grew dithyrambic. He proposed that Philip should come down to Italy. He was wasting his time at Heidelberg. The Germans were gross and life there was common: how could the soul come to her own in that prim landscape? In Tuscany the spring was scattering flowers through the land, and Philip was nineteen; let him come and they could wander through the mountain towns of Umbria. Their names sang in Philip's heart. And Cäcilie too, with her lover, had gone to Italy. When he thought of them Philip was seized with a restlessness

he could not account for. He cursed his fate because he had no money to travel, and he knew his uncle would not send him more than the fifteen pounds a month which had been agreed upon. He had not managed his allowance very well. His pension and the price of his lessons left him very little over, and he had found going about with Hayward expensive. Hayward had often suggested excursions, a visit to the play, or a bottle of wine, when Philip had come to the end of his month's money; and with the folly of his age he had been unwilling to confess he could not afford an extravagance.

Luckily Hayward's letters came seldom, and in the intervals Philip settled down again to his industrious life. He had matriculated at the university and attended one or two courses of lectures. Kuno Fischer was then at the height of his fame and during the winter had been lecturing brilliantly on Schopenhauer. It was Philip's introduction to philosophy. He had a practical mind and moved uneasily amid the abstract; but he found an unexpected fascination in listening to metaphysical disquisitions; they made him breathless; it was a little like watching a tight-rope dancer doing perilous feats over an abyss; but it was very exciting. The pessimism of the subject attracted his youth; and he believed that the world he was about to enter was a place of pitiless woe and of darkness. That made him none the less eager to enter it; and when, in due course, Mrs. Carey, acting as the correspondent for his guardian's views, suggested that it was time for him to come back to England, he agreed with enthusiasm. He must make up his mind now what he meant to do. If he left Heidelberg at the end of July they could talk things over during August, and it would be a good time to make arrangements.

The date of his departure was settled, and Mrs. Carey wrote to him again. She reminded him of Miss Wilkinson, through whose kindness he had gone to Frau Erlin's house at Heidelberg, and told him that she had arranged to spend a few weeks with them at Blackstable. She would be crossing from Flushing on such and such a day, and if he travelled at the same time he could look after her and come on to Blackstable in her company. Philip's shyness immediately made him write to say that he could not leave till a day or two afterwards. He pictured himself looking out for Miss Wilkinson, the embarrassment of going up to her and asking if it were she (and he might so easily address the wrong person and be snubbed), and then the difficulty of knowing whether in the train he ought to talk to her or whether he could ignore her and read his book.

At last he left Heidelberg. For three months he had been thinking of nothing but the future; and he went without regret. He never knew that he had been happy there. Fräulein Anna gave him a copy of *Der Trompeter von Säckingen* and in return he presented her with a volume of William Morris. Very wisely neither of them ever read the other's present.

XXXII

PHILIP was surprised when he saw his uncle and aunt. He had never noticed before that they were quite old people. The Vicar received him with his usual, not unamiable indifference. He was a little stouter, a little balder, a little grayer. Philip saw how insignificant he was. His face was weak and self-indulgent. Aunt Louisa took him in her arms and kissed him; and tears of happiness flowed down her cheeks. Philip was touched and embarrassed; he had not known with what a hungry love she cared for him.

"Oh, the time has seemed long since you've been away, Philip," she cried.

She stroked his hands and looked into his face with glad eyes. "You've grown. You're quite a man now."

There was a very small moustache on his upper lip. He had bought a razor and now and then with infinite care shaved the down off his smooth chin.

"We've been so lonely without you." And then shyly, with a little break in her voice, she asked: "You are glad to come back to your home, aren't you?"

"Yes, rather."

She was so thin that she seemed almost transparent, the arms she put round his neck were frail bones that reminded you of chicken bones, and her faded face was oh! so wrinkled. The gray curls which she still wore in the fashion of her youth gave her a queer, pathetic look; and her little withered body was like an autumn leaf, you felt it might be blown away by the first sharp wind. Philip realised that they had done with life, these two quiet little people: they belonged to a past generation, and they were waiting there patiently, rather stupidly, for death; and he, in his vigour and his youth, thirsting for excitement and adventure, was appalled at the waste. They had done nothing, and when they went it would be just as if they had never been. He felt a great pity for Aunt Louisa, and he loved her suddenly because she loved him.

Then Miss Wilkinson, who had kept discreetly out of the way till the Careys had had a chance of welcoming their nephew, came into the room.

"This is Miss Wilkinson, Philip," said Mrs. Carey.

"The prodigal has returned," she said, holding out her hand. "I have brought a rose for the prodigal's button-hole."

With a gay smile she pinned to Philip's coat the flower she had just picked in the garden. He blushed and felt foolish. He knew that Miss Wilkinson was the daughter of his Uncle William's last rector, and he had a wide acquaintance with the daughters of clergymen. They wore ill-cut clothes and stout boots. They were generally dressed in black, for in Philip's early years at Blackstable homespuns had not reached East Anglia, and the ladies of the clergy did not favour colours. Their hair was done very untidily, and they smelt aggressively of starched linen. They considered the feminine graces unbecoming and looked the same whether they were old or young. They bore their religion arrogantly. The closeness of their connection with the church made them adopt a slightly dictatorial attitude to the rest of mankind.

Miss Wilkinson was very different. She wore a white muslin gown stamped with gay little bunches of flowers, and pointed high-heeled shoes, with open-work stockings. To Philip's inexperience it seemed that she was wonderfully dressed; he did not see that her frock was cheap and showy. Her hair was elaborately dressed, with a neat curl in the middle of the forehead: it was very black, shiny and hard, and it looked as though it could never be in the least disarranged. She had large black eyes and her nose was slightly aquiline; in profile she had somewhat the look of a bird of prey, but full face she was prepossessing. She smiled a great deal, but her mouth was large and when she smiled she tried to hide her teeth, which were big and rather yellow. But what embarrassed Philip most was that she was heavily powdered; he had very strict views on feminine behaviour and did not think a lady ever powdered; but of course Miss Wilkinson was a lady because she was a clergyman's daughter, and a clergyman was a gentleman.

Philip made up his mind to dislike her thoroughly. She spoke with a slight French accent; and he did not know why she should, since she had been born and bred in the heart of England. He thought her smile affected, and the coy sprightliness of her manner irritated him. For two or three days he remained silent and hostile, but Miss Wilkinson apparently did not notice it. She was very affable. She addressed her conversation almost exclusively to him, and there was something flattering in the way she appealed constantly to his sane judgment. She made him

laugh too, and Philip could never resist people who amused him: he had a gift now and then of saying neat things; and it was pleasant to have an appreciative listener. Neither the Vicar nor Mrs. Carey had a sense of humour, and they never laughed at anything he said. As he grew used to Miss Wilkinson, and his shyness left him, he began to like her better; he found the French accent picturesque; and at a garden party which the doctor gave she was very much better dressed than anyone else. She wore a blue foulard with large white spots, and Philip was tickled at the sensation it caused.

"I'm certain they think you're no better than you should be," he told her, laughing.

"It's the dream of my life to be taken for an abandoned hussy," she answered.

One day when Miss Wilkinson was in her room he asked Aunt Louisa how old she was.

"Oh, my dear, you should never ask a lady's age; but she's certainly too old for you to marry."

The Vicar gave his slow, obese smile.

"She's no chicken, Louisa," he said. "She was nearly grown up when we were in Lincolnshire, and that was twenty years ago. She wore a pigtail hanging down her back."

"She may not have been more than ten," said Philip.

"She was older than that," said Aunt Louisa.

"I think she was nearer twenty," said the Vicar.

"Oh no, William. Sixteen or seventeen at the outside."

"That would make her well over thirty," said Philip.

At that moment Miss Wilkinson tripped downstairs, singing a song by Benjamin Goddard. She had put her hat on, for she and Philip were going for a walk, and she held out her hand for him to button her glove. He did it awkwardly. He felt embarrassed but gallant. Conversation went easily between them now, and as they strolled along they talked of all manner of things. She told Philip about Berlin, and he told her of his year in Heidelberg. As he spoke, things which had appeared of no importance gained a new interest: he described the people at Frau Erlin's house; and to the conversations between Hayward and Weeks, which at the time seemed so significant, he gave a little twist, so that they looked absurd. He was flattered at Miss Wilkinson's laughter.

"I'm quite frightened of you," she said. "You're so sarcastic."

Then she asked him playfully whether he had not had any love

affairs at Heidelberg. Without thinking, he frankly answered that he had not; but she refused to believe him.

"How secretive you are!" she said. "At your age is it likely?"

He blushed and laughed.

"You want to know too much," he said.

"Ah, I thought so," she laughed triumphantly. "Look at him blushing."

He was pleased that she should think he had been a sad dog, and he changed the conversation so as to make her believe he had all sorts of romantic things to conceal. He was angry with himself that he had not. There had been no opportunity.

Miss Wilkinson was dissatisfied with her lot. She resented having to earn her living and told Philip a long story of an uncle of her mother's, who had been expected to leave her a fortune but had married his cook and changed his will. She hinted at the luxury of her home and compared her life in Lincolnshire, with horses to ride and carriages to drive in, with the mean dependence of her present state. Philip was a little puzzled when he mentioned this afterwards to Aunt Louisa, and she told him that when she knew the Wilkinsons they had never had anything more than a pony and a dog-cart; Aunt Louisa had heard of the rich uncle, but as he was married and had children before Emily was born she could never have had much hope of inheriting his fortune. Miss Wilkinson had little good to say of Berlin, where she was now in a situation. She complained of the vulgarity of German life, and compared it bitterly with the brilliance of Paris, where she had spent a number of years. She did not say how many. She had been governess in the family of a fashionable portrait-painter, who had married a Jewish wife of means, and in their house she had met many distinguished people. She dazzled Philip with their names. Actors from the Comédie Française had come to the house frequently, and Coquelin, sitting next her at dinner, had told her he had never met a foreigner who spoke such perfect French. Alphonse Daudet had come also, and he had given her a copy of *Sapho:* he had promised to write her name in it, but she had forgotten to remind him. She treasured the volume none the less and she would lend it to Philip. Then there was Maupassant. Miss Wilkinson with a rippling laugh looked at Philip knowingly. What a man, but what a writer! Hayward had talked of Maupassant, and his reputation was not unknown to Philip.

"Did he make love to you?" he asked

The words seemed to stick funnily in his throat, but he asked them nevertheless. He liked Miss Wilkinson very much now, and was thrilled by her conversation, but he could not imagine anyone making love to her.

"What a question!" she cried. "Poor Guy, he made love to every woman he met. It was a habit that he could not break himself of."

She sighed a little, and seemed to look back tenderly on the past.

"He was a charming man," she murmured.

A greater experience than Philip's would have guessed from these words the probabilities of the encounter: the distinguished writer invited to luncheon *en famille,* the governess coming in sedately with the two tall girls she was teaching; the introduction:

"*Notre Miss Anglaise.*"

"*Mademoiselle.*"

And the luncheon during which the *Miss Anglaise* sat silent while the distinguished writer talked to his host and hostess.

But to Philip her words called up much more romantic fancies.

"Do tell me all about him," he said excitedly.

"There's nothing to tell," she said truthfully, but in such a manner as to convey that three volumes would scarcely have contained the lurid facts. "You mustn't be curious."

She began to talk of Paris. She loved the boulevards and the Bois. There was grace in every street, and the trees in the Champs Élysées had a distinction which trees had not elsewhere. They were sitting on a stile now by the high-road, and Miss Wilkinson looked with disdain upon the stately elms in front of them. And the theatres: the plays were brilliant, and the acting was incomparable. She often went with Madame Foyot, the mother of the girls she was educating, when she was trying on clothes.

"Oh, what a misery to be poor!" she cried. "These beautiful things, it's only in Paris they know how to dress, and not to be able to afford them! Poor Madame Foyot, she had no figure. Sometimes the dressmaker used to whisper to me: 'Ah, Mademoiselle, if she only had your figure.'"

Philip noticed then that Miss Wilkinson had a robust form, and was proud of it.

"Men are so stupid in England. They only think of the face. The French, who are a nation of lovers, know how much more important the figure is."

Philip had never thought of such things before, but he observed

now that Miss Wilkinson's ankles were thick and ungainly. He withdrew his eyes quickly.

"You should go to France. Why don't you go to Paris for a year. You would learn French, and it would—*déniaiser* you."

"What is that?" asked Philip.

She laughed slyly.

"You must look it out in the dictionary. Englishmen do not know how to treat women. They are so shy. Shyness is ridiculous in a man. They don't know how to make love. They can't even tell a woman she is charming without looking foolish."

Philip felt himself absurd. Miss Wilkinson evidently expected him to behave very differently; and he would have been delighted to say gallant and witty things, but they never occurred to him; and when they did he was too much afraid of making a fool of himself to say them.

"Oh, I loved Paris," sighed Miss Wilkinson. "But I had to go to Berlin. I was with the Foyots till the girls married, and then I could get nothing to do, and I had the chance of this post in Berlin. They're relations of Madame Foyot, and I accepted. I had a tiny apartment in the Rue Bréda, on the *cinquième:* it wasn't at all respectable. You know about the Rue Bréda—*ces dames,* you know."

Philip nodded, not knowing at all what she meant, but vaguely suspecting, and anxious she should not think him too ignorant.

"But I didn't care. *Je suis libre, n'est-ce-pas?"* She was very fond of speaking French, which indeed she spoke well. "Once I had such a curious adventure there."

She paused a little and Philip pressed her to tell it.

"You wouldn't tell me yours in Heidelberg," she said.

"They were so unadventurous," he retorted.

"I don't know what Mrs. Carey would say if she knew the sort of things we talk about together."

"You don't imagine I shall tell her."

"Will you promise?"

When he had done this, she told him how an art-student who had a room on the floor above her—but she interrupted herself.

"Why don't you go in for art? You paint so prettily."

"Not well enough for that."

"That is for others to judge. *Je m'y connais,* and I believe you have the making of a great artist."

"Can't you see Uncle William's face if I suddenly told him I wanted to go to Paris and study art?"

"You're your own master, aren't you?"

"You're trying to put me off. Please go on with the story."

Miss Wilkinson, with a little laugh, went on. The art-student had passed her several times on the stairs, and she had paid no particular attention. She saw that he had fine eyes, and he took off his hat very politely. And one day she found a letter slipped under her door. It was from him. He told her that he had adored her for months, and that he waited about the stairs for her to pass. Oh, it was a charming letter! Of course she did not reply, but what woman could help being flattered? And next day there was another letter! It was wonderful, passionate, and touching. When next she met him on the stairs she did not know which way to look. And every day the letters came, and now he begged her to see him. He said he would come in the evening, *vers neuf heures,* and she did not know what to do. Of course it was impossible, and he might ring and ring, but she would never open the door; and then while she was waiting for the tinkling of the bell, all nerves, suddenly he stood before her. She had forgotten to shut the door when she came in.

"*C'était une fatalité.*"

"And what happened then?" asked Philip.

"That is the end of the story," she replied, with a ripple of laughter.

Philip was silent for a moment. His heart beat quickly, and strange emotions seemed to be hustling one another in his heart. He saw the dark staircase and the chance meetings, and he admired the boldness of the letters—oh, he would never have dared to do that—and then the silent, almost mysterious entrance. It seemed to him the very soul of romance.

"What was he like?"

"Oh, he was handsome. *Charmant garçon.*"

"Do you know him still?"

Philip felt a slight feeling of irritation as he asked this.

"He treated me abominably. Men are always the same. You're heartless, all of you."

"I don't know about that," said Philip, not without embarrassment.

"Let us go home," said Miss Wilkinson.

XXXIII

PHILIP could not get Miss Wilkinson's story out of his head. It was clear enough what she meant even though she cut it short, and he was a little shocked. That sort of thing was all very well for married women, he had read enough French novels to know that in France it was indeed the rule, but Miss Wilkinson was English and unmarried; her father was a clergyman. Then it struck him that the art-student probably was neither the first nor the last of her lovers, and he gasped: he had never looked upon Miss Wilkinson like that; it seemed incredible that anyone should make love to her. In his ingenuousness he doubted her story as little as he doubted what he read in books, and he was angry that such wonderful things never happened to him. It was humiliating that if Miss Wilkinson insisted upon his telling her of his adventures in Heidelberg he would have nothing to tell. It was true that he had some power of invention, but he was not sure whether he could persuade her that he was steeped in vice; women were full of intuition, he had read that, and she might easily discover that he was fibbing. He blushed scarlet as he thought of her laughing up her sleeve.

Miss Wilkinson played the piano and sang in a rather tired voice; but her songs, Massenet, Benjamin Goddard, and Augusta Holmès, were new to Philip; and together they spent many hours at the piano. One day she wondered if he had a voice and insisted on trying it. She told him he had a pleasant baritone and offered to give him lessons. At first with his usual bashfulness he refused, but she insisted, and then every morning at a convenient time after breakfast she gave him an hour's lesson. She had a natural gift for teaching, and it was clear that she was an excellent governess. She had method and firmness. Though her French accent was so much part of her that it remained, all the mellifluousness of her manner left her when she was engaged in teaching. She put up with no nonsense. Her voice became a little peremptory, and instinctively she suppressed inattention and corrected slovenliness. She knew what she was about and put Philip to scales and exercises.

When the lesson was over she resumed without effort her seductive smiles, her voice became again soft and winning, but

Philip could not so easily put away the pupil as she the pedagogue; and this impression conflicted with the feelings her stories had aroused in him. He looked at her more narrowly. He liked her much better in the evening than in the morning. In the morning she was rather lined and the skin of her neck was just a little rough. He wished she would hide it, but the weather was very warm just then and she wore blouses which were cut low. She was very fond of white; in the morning it did not suit her. At night she often looked very attractive, she put on a gown which was almost a dinner dress, and she wore a chain of garnets round her neck; the lace about her bosom and at her elbows gave her a pleasant softness, and the scent she wore (at Blackstable no one used anything but *Eau de Cologne,* and that only on Sundays or when suffering from a sick headache) was troubling and exotic. She really looked very young then.

Philip was much exercised over her age. He added twenty and seventeen together, and could not bring them to a satisfactory total. He asked Aunt Louisa more than once why she thought Miss Wilkinson was thirty-seven: she didn't look more than thirty, and everyone knew that foreigners aged more rapidly than English women; Miss Wilkinson had lived so long abroad that she might almost be called a foreigner. He personally wouldn't have thought her more than twenty-six.

"She's more than that," said Aunt Louisa.

Philip did not believe in the accuracy of the Careys' statements. All they distinctly remembered was that Miss Wilkinson had not got her hair up the last time they saw her in Lincolnshire. Well, she might have been twelve then: it was so long ago and the Vicar was always so unreliable. They said it was twenty years, ago, but people used round figures, and it was just as likely to be eighteen years, or seventeen. Seventeen and twelve were only twenty-nine, and hang it all, that wasn't old, was it? Cleopatra was forty-eight when Antony threw away the world for her sake.

It was a fine summer. Day after day was hot and cloudless; but the heat was tempered by the neighbourhood of the sea, and there was a pleasant exhilaration in the air, so that one was excited and not oppressed by the August sunshine. There was a pond in the garden in which a fountain played; water lilies grew in it and gold fish sunned themselves on the surface. Philip and Miss Wilkinson used to take rugs and cushions there after dinner and lie on the lawn in the shade of a tall hedge of roses. They talked and read all the afternoon. They smoked cigarettes,

which the Vicar did not allow in the house; he thought smoking a disgusting habit, and used frequently to say that it was disgraceful for anyone to grow a slave to a habit. He forgot that he was himself a slave to afternoon tea.

One day Miss Wilkinson gave Philip *La Vie de Bohème*. She had found it by accident when she was rummaging among the books in the Vicar's study. It had been bought in a lot with something Mr. Carey wanted and had remained undiscovered for ten years.

Philip began to read Murger's fascinating, ill-written, absurd masterpiece, and fell at once under its spell. His soul danced with joy at that picture of starvation which is so good-humoured, of squalor which is so picturesque, of sordid love which is so romantic, of bathos which is so moving. Rodolphe and Mimi, Musette and Schaunard! They wander through the gray streets of the Latin Quarter, finding refuge now in one attic, now in another, in their quaint costumes of Louis Philippe, with their tears and their smiles, happy-go-lucky and reckless. Who can resist them? It is only when you return to the book with a sounder judgment that you find how gross their pleasures were, how vulgar their minds; and you feel the utter worthlessness, as artists and as human beings, of that gay procession. Philip was enraptured.

"Don't you wish you were going to Paris instead of London?" asked Miss Wilkinson, smiling at his enthusiasm.

"It's too late now even if I did," he answered.

During the fortnight he had been back from Germany there had been much discussion between himself and his uncle about his future. He had refused definitely to go to Oxford, and now that there was no chance of his getting scholarships even Mr. Carey came to the conclusion that he could not afford it. His entire fortune had consisted of only two thousand pounds, and though it had been invested in mortgages at five per cent, he had not been able to live on the interest. It was now a little reduced. It would be absurd to spend two hundred a year, the least he could live on at a university, for three years at Oxford which would lead him no nearer to earning his living. He was anxious to go straight to London. Mrs. Carey thought there were only four professions for a gentleman, the Army, the Navy, the Law, and the Church. She had added medicine because her brother-in-law practised it, but did not forget that in her young days no one ever considered the doctor a gentleman. The first two were out of the question, and Philip was firm in his refusal to be ordained. Only the law remained. The local doctor had suggested that

many gentlemen now went in for engineering, but Mrs. Carey opposed the idea at once.

"I shouldn't like Philip to go into trade," she said.

"No, he must have a profession," answered the Vicar.

"Why not make him a doctor like his father?"

"I should hate it," said Philip.

Mrs. Carey was not sorry. The Bar seemed out of the question, since he was not going to Oxford, for the Careys were under the impression that a degree was still necessary for success in that calling; and finally it was suggested that he should become articled to a solicitor. They wrote to the family lawyer, Albert Nixon, who was co-executor with the Vicar of Blackstable for the late Henry Carey's estate, and asked him whether he would take Philip. In a day or two the answer came back that he had not a vacancy, and was very much opposed to the whole scheme; the profession was greatly overcrowded, and without capital or connections a man had small chance of becoming more than a managing clerk; he suggested, however, that Philip should become a chartered accountant. Neither the Vicar nor his wife knew in the least what this was, and Philip had never heard of anyone being a chartered accountant; but another letter from the solicitor explained that the growth of modern businesses and the increase of companies had led to the formation of many firms of accountants to examine the books and put into the financial affairs of their clients an order which old-fashioned methods had lacked. Some years before a Royal Charter had been obtained, and the profession was becoming every year more respectable, lucrative, and important. The chartered accountants whom Albert Nixon had employed for thirty years happened to have a vacancy for an articled pupil, and would take Philip for a fee of three hundred pounds. Half of this would be returned during the five years the articles lasted in the form of salary. The prospect was not exciting, but Philip felt that he must decide on something, and the thought of living in London over-balanced the slight shrinking he felt. The Vicar of Blackstable wrote to ask Mr. Nixon whether it was a profession suited to a gentleman; and Mr. Nixon replied that, since the Charter, men were going into it who had been to public schools and a university; moreover, if Philip disliked the work and after a year wished to leave, Herbert Carter, for that was the accountant's name, would return half the money paid for the articles. This settled it, and it was arranged that Philip should start work on the fifteenth of September.

"I have a full month before me," said Philip.

"And then you go to freedom and I to bondage," returned Miss Wilkinson.

Her holidays were to last six weeks, and she would be leaving Blackstable only a day or two before Philip.

"I wonder if we shall ever meet again," she said.

"I don't know why not."

"Oh, don't speak in that practical way. I never knew anyone so unsentimental."

Philip reddened. He was afraid that Miss Wilkinson would think him a milksop: after all she was a young woman, sometimes quite pretty, and he was getting on for twenty; it was absurd that they should talk of nothing but art and literature. He ought to make love to her. They had talked a good deal of love. There was the art-student in the Rue Bréda, and then there was the painter in whose family she had lived so long in Paris: he had asked her to sit for him, and had started to make love to her so violently that she was forced to invent excuses not to sit to him again. It was clear enough that Miss Wilkinson was used to attentions of that sort. She looked very nice now in a large straw hat: it was hot that afternoon, the hottest day they had had, and beads of sweat stood in a line on her upper lip. He called to mind Fräulein Cäcilie and Herr Sung. He had never thought of Cäcilie in an amorous way, she was exceedingly plain; but now, looking back, the affair seemed very romantic. He had a chance of romance too. Miss Wilkinson was practically French, and that added zest to a possible adventure. When he thought of it at night in bed, or when he sat by himself in the garden reading a book, he was thrilled by it; but when he saw Miss Wilkinson it seemed less picturesque.

At all events, after what she had told him, she would not be surprised if he made love to her. He had a feeling that she must think it odd of him to make no sign: perhaps it was only his fancy, but once or twice in the last day or two he had imagined that there was a suspicion of contempt in her eyes.

"A penny for your thoughts," said Miss Wilkinson, looking at him with a smile.

"I'm not going to tell you," he answered.

He was thinking that he ought to kiss her there and then. He wondered if she expected him to do it; but after all he didn't see how he could without any preliminary business at all. She would just think him mad, or she might slap his face; and perhaps she would complain to his uncle. He wondered how Herr Sung had started with Fräulein Cäcilie. It would be beastly if she told his

uncle: he knew what his uncle was, he would tell the doctor and Josiah Graves; and he would look a perfect fool. Aunt Louisa kept on saying that Miss Wilkinson was thirty-seven if she was a day; he shuddered at the thought of the ridicule he would be exposed to; they would say she was old enough to be his mother.

"Twopence for your thoughts," smiled Miss Wilkinson.

"I was thinking about you," he answered boldly.

That at all events committed him to nothing.

"What were you thinking?"

"Ah, now you want to know too much."

"Naughty boy!" said Miss Wilkinson.

There it was again! Whenever he had succeeded in working himself up she said something which reminded him of the governess. She called him playfully a naughty boy when he did not sing his exercises to her satisfaction. This time he grew quite sulky.

"I wish you wouldn't treat me as if I were a child."

"Are you cross?"

"Very."

"I didn't mean to."

She put out her hand and he took it. Once or twice lately when they shook hands at night he had fancied she slightly pressed his hand, but this time there was no doubt about it.

He did not quite know what he ought to say next. Here at last was his chance of an adventure, and he would be a fool not to take it; but it was a little ordinary, and he had expected more glamour. He had read many descriptions of love, and he felt in himself none of that uprush of emotion which novelists described; he was not carried off his feet in wave upon wave of passion; nor was Miss Wilkinson the ideal: he had often pictured to himself the great violet eyes and the alabaster skin of some lovely girl, and he had thought of himself burying his face in the rippling masses of her auburn hair. He could not imagine himself burying his face in Miss Wilkinson's hair, it always struck him as a little sticky. All the same it would be very satisfactory to have an intrigue, and he thrilled with the legitimate pride he would enjoy in his conquest. He owed it to himself to seduce her. He made up his mind to kiss Miss Wilkinson; not then, but in the evening; it would be easier in the dark, and after he had kissed her the rest would follow. He would kiss her that very evening. He swore an oath to that effect.

He laid his plans. After supper he suggested that they should take a stroll in the garden. Miss Wilkinson accepted, and they

sauntered side by side. Philip was very nervous. He did not know why, but the conversation would not lead in the right direction; he had decided that the first thing to do was to put his arm round her waist; but he could not suddenly put his arm round her waist when she was talking of the regatta which was to be held next week. He led her artfully into the darkest parts of the garden, but having arrived there his courage failed him. They sat on a bench, and he had really made up his mind that here was his opportunity when Miss Wilkinson said she was sure there were earwigs and insisted on moving. They walked round the garden once more, and Philip promised himself he would take the plunge before they arrived at that bench again; but as they passed the house, they saw Mrs. Carey standing at the door.

"Hadn't you young people better come in? I'm sure the night air isn't good for you."

"Perhaps we had better go in," said Philip. "I don't want you to catch cold."

He said it with a sigh of relief. He could attempt nothing more that night. But afterwards, when he was alone in his room, he was furious with himself. He had been a perfect fool. He was certain that Miss Wilkinson expected him to kiss her, otherwise she wouldn't have come into the garden. She was always saying that only Frenchmen knew how to treat women. Philip had read French novels. If he had been a Frenchman he would have seized her in his arms and told her passionately that he adored her; he would have pressed his lips on her *nuque*. He did not know why Frenchmen always kissed ladies on the *nuque*. He did not himself see anything so very attractive in the nape of the neck. Of course it was much easier for Frenchmen to do these things; the language was such an aid; Philip could never help feeling that to say passionate things in English sounded a little absurd. He wished now that he had never undertaken the siege of Miss Wilkinson's virtue; the first fortnight had been so jolly, and now he was wretched; but he was determined not to give in. he would never respect himself again if he did, and he made up his mind irrevocably that the next night he would kiss her without fail.

Next day when he got up he saw it was raining, and his first thought was that they would not be able to go into the garden that evening. He was in high spirits at breakfast. Miss Wilkinson sent Mary Ann in to say that she had a headache and would remain in bed. She did not come down till tea-time, when she appeared in a becoming wrapper and a pale face; but she

was quite recovered by supper, and the meal was very cheerful. After prayers she said she would go straight to bed, and she kissed Mrs. Carey. Then she turned to Philip.

"Good gracious!" she cried. "I was just going to kiss you too."

"Why don't you?" he said.

She laughed and held out her hand. She distinctly pressed his.

The following day there was not a cloud in the sky, and the garden was sweet and fresh after the rain. Philip went down to the beach to bathe and when he came home ate a magnificent dinner. They were having a tennis party at the vicarage in the afternoon and Miss Wilkinson put on her best dress. She certainly knew how to wear her clothes, and Philip could not help noticing how elegant she looked beside the curate's wife and the doctor's married daughter. There were two roses in her waistband. She sat in a garden chair by the side of the lawn, holding a red parasol over herself, and the light on her face was very becoming. Philip was fond of tennis. He served well and as he ran clumsily played close to the net: notwithstanding his clubfoot he was quick, and it was difficult to get a ball past him. He was pleased because he won all his sets. At tea he lay down at Miss Wilkinson's feet, hot and panting.

"Flannels suit you," she said. "You look very nice this afternoon."

He blushed with delight.

"I can honestly return the compliment. You look perfectly ravishing."

She smiled and gave him a long look with her black eyes.

After supper he insisted that she should come out.

"Haven't you had enough exercise for one day?"

"It'll be lovely in the garden tonight. The stars are all out."

He was in high spirits.

"D'you know, Mrs. Carey has been scolding me on your account?" said Miss Wilkinson, when they were sauntering through the kitchen-garden. "She says I musn't flirt with you."

"Have you been flirting with me? I hadn't noticed it."

"She was only joking."

"It was very unkind of you to refuse to kiss me last night."

"If you saw the look your uncle gave me when I said what I did!"

"Was that all that prevented you?"

"I prefer to kiss people without witnesses."

"There are no witnesses now."

Philip put his arm round her waist and kissed her lips. She only laughed a little and made no attempt to withdraw. It had come quite naturally. Philip was very proud of himself. He said he would, and he had. It was the easiest thing in the world. He wished he had done it before. He did it again.

"Oh, you mustn't," she said.

"Why not?"

"Because I like it," she laughed.

XXXIV

Next day after dinner they took their rugs and cushions to the fountain, and their books; but they did not read. Miss Wilkinson made herself comfortable and she opened the red sun-shade. Philip was not at all shy now, but at first she would not let him kiss her.

"It was very wrong of me last night," she said. "I couldn't sleep, I felt I'd done so wrong."

"What nonsense!" he cried. "I'm sure you slept like a top."

"What do you think your uncle would say if he knew?"

"There's no reason why he should know."

He leaned over her, and his heart went pit-a-pat.

"Why d'you want to kiss me?"

He knew he ought to reply: "Because I love you." But he could not bring himself to say it.

"Why do you think?" he asked instead.

She looked at him with smiling eyes and touched his face with the tips of her fingers.

"How smooth your face is," she murmured.

"I want shaving awfully," he said.

It was astonishing how difficult he found it to make romantic speeches. He found that silence helped him much more than words. He could look inexpressible things. Miss Wilkinson sighed.

"Do you like me at all?"

"Yes, awfully."

When he tried to kiss her again she did not resist. He pretended to be much more passionate than he really was, and he succeeded in playing a part which looked very well in his own eyes.

"I'm beginning to be rather frightened of you," said Miss Wilkinson.

"You'll come out after supper, won't you?" he begged.

"Not unless you promise to behave yourself."

"I'll promise anything."

He was catching fire from the flame he was partly simulating, and at tea-time he was obstreperously merry. Miss Wilkinson looked at him nervously.

"You mustn't have those shining eyes," she said to him afterwards. "What will your Aunt Louisa think?"

"I don't care what she thinks."

Miss Wilkinson gave a little laugh of pleasure. They had no sooner finished supper than he said to her:

"Are you going to keep me company while I smoke a cigarette?"

"Why don't you let Miss Wilkinson rest?" said Mrs. Carey. "You must remember she's not as young as you."

"Oh, I'd like to go out, Mrs. Carey," she said, rather acidly.

"After dinner walk a mile, after supper rest a while," said the Vicar.

"Your aunt is very nice, but she gets on my nerves sometimes," said Miss Wilkinson, as soon as they closed the side-door behind them.

Philip threw away the cigarette he had just lighted, and flung his arms round her. She tried to push him away.

"You promised you'd be good, Philip."

"You didn't think I was going to keep a promise like that?"

"Not so near the house, Philip," she said. "Supposing someone should come out suddenly?"

He led her to the kitchen garden where no one was likely to come, and this time Miss Wilkinson did not think of earwigs. He kissed her passionately. It was one of the things that puzzled him that he did not like her at all in the morning, and only moderately in the afternoon, but at night the touch of her hand thrilled him. He said things that he would never have thought himself capable of saying; he could certainly never have said them in the broad light of day; and he listened to himself with wonder and satisfaction.

"How beautifully you make love," she said.

That was what he thought himself.

"Oh, if I could only say all the things that burn my heart!" he murmured passionately.

It was splendid. It was the most thrilling game he had ever played; and the wonderful thing was that he felt almost all he said. It was only that he exaggerated a little. He was tremendously interested and excited in the effect he could see it had on her. It was obviously with an effort that at last she suggested going in.

"Oh, don't go yet," he cried.

"I must," she muttered. "I'm frightened."

He had a sudden intuition what was the right thing to do then.

"I can't go in yet. I shall stay here and think. My cheeks are burning. I want the night-air. Good-night."

He held out his hand seriously, and she took it in silence.

He thought she stifled a sob. Oh, it was magnificent! When, after a decent interval during which he had been rather bored in the dark garden by himself, he went in he found that Miss Wilkinson had already gone to bed.

After that things were different between them. The next day and the day after Philip showed himself an eager lover. He was deliciously flattered to discover that Miss Wilkinson was in love with him: she told him so in English, and she told him so in French. She paid him compliments. No one had ever informed him before that his eyes were charming and that he had a sensual mouth. He had never bothered much about his personal appearance, but now, when occasion presented, he looked at himself in the glass with satisfaction. When he kissed her it was wonderful to feel the passion that seemed to thrill her soul. He kissed her a good deal, for he found it easier to do that than to say the things he instinctively felt she expected of him. It still made him feel a fool to say he worshipped her. He wished there were someone to whom he could boast a little, and he would willingly have discussed minute points of his conduct. Sometimes she said things that were enigmatic, and he was puzzled. He wished Hayward had been there so that he could ask him what he thought she meant, and what he had better do next. He could not make up his mind whether he ought to rush things or let them take their time. There were only three weeks more.

"I can't bear to think of that," she said. "It breaks my heart. And then perhaps we shall never see one another again."

"If you cared for me at all, you wouldn't be so unkind to me," he whispered.

"Oh, why can't you be content to let it go on as it is? Men are always the same. They're never satisfied."

And when he pressed her, she said:

"But don't you see it's impossible. How can we here?"

He proposed all sorts of schemes, but she would not have anything to do with them.

"I daren't take the risk. It would be too dreadful if your aunt found out."

A day or two later he had an idea which seemed brilliant.

"Look here, if you had a headache on Sunday evening and offered to stay at home and look after the house, Aunt Louisa would go to church."

Generally Mrs. Carey remained in on Sunday evening in order to allow Mary Ann to go to church, but she would welcome the opportunity of attending evensong.

Philip had not found it necessary to impart to his relations the change in his views on Christianity which had occurred in Germany; they could not be expected to understand; and it seemed less trouble to go to church quietly. But he only went in the morning. He regarded this as a graceful concession to the prejudices of society and his refusal to go a second time as an adequate assertion of free thought.

When he made the suggestion, Miss Wilkinson did not speak for a moment, then shook her head.

"No, I won't," she said.

But on Sunday at tea-time she surprised Philip.

"I don't think I'll come to church this evening," she said suddenly. "I've really got a dreadful headache."

Mrs. Carey, much concerned, insisted on giving her some 'drops' which she was herself in the habit of using. Miss Wilkinson thanked her, and immediately after tea announced that she would go to her room and lie down.

"Are you sure there's nothing you'll want?" asked Mrs. Carey anxiously.

"Quite sure, thank you."

"Because, if there isn't, I think I'll go to church. I don't often have the chance of going in the evening."

"Oh yes, do go."

"I shall be in," said Philip. "If Miss Wilkinson wants anything, she can always call me."

"You'd better leave the drawing-room door open, Philip, so that if Miss Wilkinson rings, you'll hear."

"Certainly," said Philip.

So after six o'clock Philip was left alone in the house with Miss Wilkinson. He felt sick with apprehension. He wished with all his heart that he had not suggested the plan; but it was too late now; he must take the opportunity which he had made. What would Miss Wilkinson think of him if he did not! He went into the hall and listened. There was not a sound. He wondered if Miss Wilkinson really had a headache. Perhaps she had forgotten his suggestion. His heart beat painfully. He crept up the stairs as softly as he could, and he stopped with a start when they creaked. He stood outside Miss Wilkinson's room and listened; he put his hand on the knob of the door-handle. He waited. It seemed to him that he waited for at least five minutes, trying to make up his mind; and his hand trembled. He would willingly have bolted, but he was afraid of the remorse which he knew would seize him. It was like getting on the highest diving-

board in a swimming-bath; it looked nothing from below, but when you got up there and stared down at the water your heart sank; and the only thing that forced you to dive was the shame of coming down meekly by the steps you had climbed up. Philip screwed up his courage. He turned the handle softly and walked in. He seemed to himself to be trembling like a leaf.

Miss Wilkinson was standing at the dressing-table with her back to the door, and she turned round quickly when she heard it open.

"Oh, it's you. What d'you want?"

She had taken off her skirt and blouse, and was standing in her petticoat. It was short and only came down to the top of her boots; the upper part of it was black, of some shiny material, and there was a red flounce. She wore a camisole of white calico with short arms. She looked grotesque. Philip's heart sank as he stared at her; she had never seemed so unattractive; but it was too late now. He closed the door behind him and locked it.

XXXV

Philip woke early next morning. His sleep had been restless; but when he stretched his legs and looked at the sunshine that slid through the Venetian blinds, making patterns on the floor, he sighed with satisfaction. He was delighted with himself. He began to think of Miss Wilkinson. She had asked him to call her Emily, but, he knew not why, he could not; he always thought of her as Miss Wilkinson. Since she chid him for so addressing her, he avoided using her name at all. During his childhood he had often heard a sister of Aunt Louisa, the widow of a naval officer, spoken of as Aunt Emily. It made him uncomfortable to call Miss Wilkinson by that name, nor could he think of any that would have suited her better. She had begun as Miss Wilkinson, and it seemed inseparable from his impression of her. He frowned a little: somehow or other he saw her now at her worst; he could not forget his dismay when she turned round and he saw her in her camisole and the short petticoat; he remembered the slight roughness of her skin and the sharp, long lines on the side of the neck. His triumph was short-lived. He reckoned out her age again, and he did not see how she could be less than forty. It made the affair ridiculous. She was plain and old. His quick fancy showed her to him, wrinkled, haggard, made-up, in those frocks which were too showy for her position and too young for her years. He shuddered; he felt suddenly that he never wanted to see her again; he could not bear the thought of kissing her. He was horrified with himself. Was that love?

He took as long as he could over dressing in order to put back the moment of seeing her, and when at last he went into the dining-room it was with a sinking heart. Prayers were over, and they were sitting down at breakfast.

"Lazy bones," Miss Wilkinson cried gaily.

He looked at her and gave a little gasp of relief. She was sitting with her back to the window. She was really quite nice. He wondered why he had thought such things about her. His self-satisfaction returned to him.

He was taken aback by the change in her. She told him in a voice thrilling with emotion immediately after breakfast that she

loved him; and when a little later they went into the drawing-room for his singing lesson and she sat down on the music-stool she put up her face in the middle of a scale and said:

"*Embrasse-moi.*"

When he bent down she flung her arms round his neck. It was slightly uncomfortable, for she held him in such a position that he felt rather choked.

"*Ah, je t'aime. Je t'aime. Je t'aime,*" she cried, with her extravagantly French accent.

Philip wished she would speak English.

"I say, I don't know if it's struck you that the gardener's quite likely to pass the window any minute."

"*Ah, je m'en fiche du jardinier. Je m'en refiche, et je m'en contrefiche.*"

Philip thought it was very like a French novel, and he did not know why it slightly irritated him.

At last he said:

"Well, I think I'll tootle along to the beach and have a dip."

"Oh, you're not going to leave me this morning—of all mornings?"

Philip did not quite know why he should not, but it did not matter.

"Would you like me to stay?" he smiled.

"Oh, you darling! But no, go. Go. I want to think of you mastering the salt sea waves, bathing your limbs in the broad ocean."

He got his hat and sauntered off.

"What rot women talk!" he thought to himself.

But he was pleased and happy and flattered. She was evidently frightfully gone on him. As he limped along the high street of Blackstable he looked with a tinge of superciliousness at the people he passed. He knew a good many to nod to, and as he gave them a smile of recognition he thought to himself, if they only knew! He did want someone to know very badly. He thought he would write to Hayward, and in his mind composed the letter. He would talk of the garden and the roses, and the little French governess, like an exotic flower amongst them, scented and perverse: he would say she was French, because—well, she had lived in France so long that she almost was, and besides it would be shabby to give the whole thing away too exactly, don't you know; and he would tell Hayward how he had seen her first in her pretty muslin dress and of the flower she had given him. He made a delicate idyl of it: the sunshine and

the sea gave it passion and magic, and the stars added poetry, and the old vicarage garden was a fit and exquisite setting. There was something Meredithian about it: it was not quite Lucy Feverel and not quite Clara Middleton; but it was inexpressibly charming. Philip's heart beat quickly. He was so delighted with his fancies that he began thinking of them again as soon as he crawled back, dripping and cold, into his bathing-machine. He thought of the object of his affections. She had the most adorable little nose and large brown eyes—he would describe her to Hayward—and masses of soft brown hair, the sort of hair it was delicious to bury your face in, and a skin which was like ivory and sunshine, and her cheek was like a red, red rose. How old was she? Eighteen perhaps, and he called her Musette. Her laughter was like a rippling brook, and her voice was so soft, so low, it was the sweetest music he had ever heard.

"What *are* you thinking about?"

Philip stopped suddenly. He was walking slowly home.

"I've been waving at you for the last quarter of a mile. You *are* absent-minded."

Miss Wilkinson was standing in front of him, laughing at his surprise.

"I thought I'd come and meet you."

"That's awfully nice of you," he said.

"Did I startle you?"

"You did a bit," he admitted.

He wrote his letter to Hayward all the same. There were eight pages of it.

The fortnight that remained passed quickly, and though each evening, when they went into the garden after supper, Miss Wilkinson remarked that one day more had gone, Philip was in too cheerful spirits to let the thought depress him. One night Miss Wilkinson suggested that it would be delightful if she could exchange her situation in Berlin for one in London. Then they could see one another constantly. Philip said it would be very jolly, but the prospect aroused no enthusiasm in him; he was looking forward to a wonderful life in London, and he preferred not to be hampered. He spoke a little too freely of all he meant to do, and allowed Miss Wilkinson to see that already he was longing to be off.

"You wouldn't talk like that if you loved me," she cried.

He was taken aback and remained silent.

"What a fool I've been," she muttered.

To his surprise he saw that she was crying. He had a tender heart, and hated to see anyone miserable.

"Oh, I'm awfully sorry. What have I done? Don't cry."

"Oh, Philip, don't leave me. You don't know what you mean to me. I have such a wretched life, and you've made me so happy."

He kissed her silently. There really was anguish in her tone, and he was frightened. It had never occurred to him that she meant what she said quite, quite seriously.

"I'm awfully sorry. You know I'm frightfully fond of you. I wish you would come to London."

"You know I can't. Places are almost impossible to get, and I hate English life."

Almost unconscious that he was acting a part, moved by her distress, he pressed her more and more. Her tears vaguely flattered him, and he kissed her with real passion.

But a day or two later she made a real scene. There was a tennis-party at the vicarage, and two girls came, daughters of a retired major in an Indian regiment who had lately settled in Blackstable. They were very pretty, one was Philip's age and the other was a year or two younger. Being used to the society of young men (they were full of stories of hill-stations in India, and at that time the stories of Rudyard Kipling were in every hand) they began to chaff Philip gaily; and he, pleased with the novelty—the young ladies at Blackstable treated the Vicar's nephew with a certain seriousness—was gay and jolly. Some devil within him prompted him to start a violent flirtation with them both, and as he was the only young man there, they were quite willing to meet him half-way. It happened that they played tennis quite well and Philip was tired of pat-ball with Miss Wilkinson (she had only begun to play when she came to Blackstable), so when he arranged the sets after tea he suggested that Miss Wilkinson should play against the curate's wife, with the curate as her partner; and he would play later with the new-comers. He sat down by the elder Miss O'Connor and said to her in an undertone:

"We'll get the duffers out of the way first, and then we'll have a jolly set afterwards."

Apparently Miss Wilkinson overheard him, for she threw down her racket, and, saying she had a headache, went away. It was plain to everyone that she was offended. Philip was annoyed that she should make the fact public. The set was arranged without her, but presently Mrs. Carey called him.

"Philip, you've hurt Emily's feelings. She's gone to her room and she's crying."

"What about?"

"Oh, something about a duffer's set. Do go to her, and say you didn't mean to be unkind, there's a good boy."

"All right."

He knocked at Miss Wilkinson's door, but receiving no answer went in. He found her lying face downwards on her bed, weeping. He touched her on the shoulder.

"I say, what on earth's the matter?"

"Leave me alone. I never want to speak to you again."

"What have I done? I'm awfully sorry if I've hurt your feelings. I didn't mean to. I say, do get up."

"Oh, I'm so unhappy. How could you be cruel to me? You know I hate that stupid game. I only play because I want to play with you."

She got up and walked towards the dressing-table, but after a quick look in the glass sank into a chair. She made her handkerchief into a ball and dabbed her eyes with it.

"I've given you the greatest thing a woman can give a man—oh, what a fool I was—and you have no gratitude. You must be quite heartless. How could you be so cruel as to torment me by flirting with those vulgar girls. We've only got just over a week. Can't you even give me that?"

Philip stood over her rather sulkily. He thought her behaviour childish. He was vexed with her for having shown her ill-temper before strangers.

"But you know I don't care twopence about either of the O'Connors. Why on earth should you think I do?"

Miss Wilkinson put away her handkerchief. Her tears had made marks on her powdered face, and her hair was somewhat disarranged. Her white dress did not suit her very well just then. She looked at Philip with hungry, passionate eyes.

"Because you're twenty and so's she," she said hoarsely. "And I'm old."

Philip reddened and looked away. The anguish of her tone made him feel strangely uneasy. He wished with all his heart that he had never had anything to do with Miss Wilkinson.

"I don't want to make you unhappy," he said awkwardly. "You'd better go down and look after your friends. They'll wonder what has become of you."

"All right."

He was glad to leave her.

The quarrel was quickly followed by a reconciliation, but the few days that remained were sometimes irksome to Philip. He wanted to talk of nothing but the future, and the future invariably reduced Miss Wilkinson to tears. At first her weeping affected him, and feeling himself a beast he redoubled his protestations of undying passion; but now it irritated him: it would have been all very well if she had been a girl, but it was silly of a grown-up woman to cry so much. She never ceased reminding him that he was under a debt of gratitude to her which he could never repay. He was willing to acknowledge this since she made a point of it, but he did not really know why he should be any more grateful to her than she to him. He was expected to show his sense of obligation in ways which were rather a nuisance: he had been a good deal used to solitude, and it was a necessity to him sometimes; but Miss Wilkinson looked upon it as an unkindness if he was not always at her beck and call. The Miss O'Connors asked them both to tea, and Philip would have liked to go, but Miss Wilkinson said she only had five days more and wanted him entirely to herself. It was flattering, but a bore. Miss Wilkinson told him stories of the exquisite delicacy of Frenchmen when they stood in the same relation to fair ladies as he to Miss Wilkinson. She praised their courtesy, their passion for self-sacrifice, their perfect tact. Miss Wilkinson seemed to want a great deal.

Philip listened to her enumeration of the qualities which must be possessed by the perfect lover, and he could not help feeling a certain satisfaction that she lived in Berlin.

"You will write to me, won't you? Write to me every day. I want to know everything you're doing. You must keep nothing from me."

"I shall be awfully busy," he answered. "I'll write as often as I can."

She flung her arms passionately round his neck. He was embarrassed sometimes by the demonstrations of her affection. He would have preferred her to be more passive. It shocked him a little that she should give him so marked a lead: it did not tally altogether with his prepossessions about the modesty of the feminine temperament.

At length the day came on which Miss Wilkinson was to go, and she came down to breakfast, pale and subdued, in a serviceable travelling dress of black and white check. She looked a very competent governess. Philip was silent too, for he did not quite know what to say that would fit the circumstance; and he was

terribly afraid that, if he said something flippant, Miss Wilkinson would break down before his uncle and make a scene. They had said their last good-bye to one another in the garden the night before, and Philip was relieved that there was now no opportunity for them to be alone. He remained in the dining-room after breakfast in case Miss Wilkinson should insist on kissing him on the stairs. He did not want Mary Ann, now a woman hard upon middle age with a sharp tongue, to catch them in a compromising position. Mary Ann did not like Miss Wilkinson and called her an old cat. Aunt Louisa was not very well and could not come to the station, but the Vicar and Philip saw her off. Just as the train was leaving she leaned out and kissed Mr. Carey.

"I must kiss you too, Philip," she said.

"All right," he said, blushing.

He stood up on the step and she kissed him quickly. The train started, and Miss Wilkinson sank into the corner of her carriage and wept disconsolately. Philip as he walked back to the vicarage felt a distinct sensation of relief.

"Well, did you see her safely off?" asked Aunt Louisa, when they got in.

"Yes, she seemed rather weepy. She insisted on kissing me and Philip."

"Oh, well, at her age it's not dangerous." Mrs. Carey pointed to the sideboard. "There's a letter for you, Philip. It came by the second post."

It was from Hayward and ran as follows:

My dear boy,

I answer your letter at once. I ventured to read it to a great friend of mind, a charming woman whose help and sympathy have been very precious to me, a woman withal with a real feeling for art and literature; and we agreed that it was charming. You wrote from your heart and you do not know the delightful naïveté which is in every line. And because you love you write like a poet. Ah, dear boy, that is the real thing: I felt the glow of your young passion, and your prose was musical from the sincerity of your emotion. You must be happy! I wish I could have been present unseen in that enchanted garden while you wandered hand in hand, like Daphnis and Chloe, amid the flowers. I can see you, my Daphnis, with the light of young love in your eyes, tender, enraptured, and ardent; while Chloe in your arms, so young and soft and fresh, vowing she would ne'er consent—consented. Roses and violets and

honeysuckle! Oh, my friend, I envy you. It is so good to think that your first love should have been pure poetry. Treasure the moments, for the immortal gods have given you the Greatest Gift of All, and it will be a sweet, sad memory till your dying day. You will never again enjoy that careless rapture. First love is best love; and she is beautiful and you are young, and all the world is yours. I felt my pulse go faster when with your adorable simplicity you told me that you buried your face in her long hair. I am sure that it is that exquisite chestnut which seems just touched with gold. I would have you sit under a leafy tree side by side, and read together Romeo and Juliet; *and then I would have you fall on your knees and on my behalf kiss the ground on which her foot has left its imprint; then tell her it is the homage of a poet to her radiant youth and to your love for her.*

Yours always,

G. Etheridge Hayward.

"What damned rot!" said Philip, when he finished the letter. Miss Wilkinson oddly enough had suggested that they should read *Romeo and Juliet* together; but Philip had firmly declined. Then, as he put the letter in his pocket, he felt a queer little pang of bitterness because reality seemed so different from the ideal.

XXXVI

A FEW days later Philip went to London. The curate had recommended rooms in Barnes, and these Philip engaged by letter at fourteen shillings a week. He reached them in the evening; and the landlady, a funny little old woman with a shrivelled body and a deeply wrinkled face, had prepared high tea for him. Most of the sitting-room was taken up by the sideboard and a square table; against one wall was a sofa covered with horsehair, and by the fireplace an arm-chair to match: there was a white antimacassar over the back of it, and on the seat, because the springs were broken, a hard cushion.

After having his tea he unpacked and arranged his books, then he sat down and tried to read; but he was depressed. The silence in the street made him slightly uncomfortable, and he felt very much alone.

Next day he got up early. He put on his tail-coat and the tall hat which he had worn at school; but it was very shabby, and he made up his mind to stop at the Stores on his way to the office and buy a new one. When he had done this he found himself in plenty of time and so walked along the Strand. The office of Messrs. Herbert Carter & Co. was in a little street off Chancery Lane, and he had to ask his way two or three times. He felt that people were staring at him a great deal, and once he took off his hat to see whether by chance the label had been left on. When he arrived he knocked at the door; but no one answered, and looking at his watch he found it was barely half past nine; he supposed he was too early. He went away and ten minutes later returned to find an office-boy, with a long nose, pimply face, and a Scotch accent, opening the door. Philip asked for Mr. Herbert Carter. He had not come yet.

"When will he be here?"

"Between ten and half past."

"I'd better wait," said Philip.

"What are you wanting?" asked the office-boy.

Philip was nervous, but tried to hide the fact by a jocose manner.

"Well, I'm going to work here if you have no objection."

"Oh, you're the new articled clerk? You'd better come in. Mr. Goodworthy'll be here in a while."

Philip walked in, and as he did so saw the office-boy—he was about the same age as Philip and called himself a junior clerk—look at his foot. He flushed and, sitting down, hid it behind the other. He looked round the room. It was dark and very dingy. It was lit by a skylight. There were three rows of desks in it and against them high stools. Over the chimney-piece was a dirty engraving of a prize-fight. Presently a clerk came in and then another; they glanced at Philip and in an undertone asked the office-boy (Philip found his name was Macdougal) who he was. A whistle blew, and Macdougal got up.

"Mr. Goodworthy's come. He's the managing clerk. Shall I tell him you're here?"

"Yes, please," said Philip.

The office-boy went out and in a moment returned.

"Will you come this way?"

Philip followed him across the passage and was shown into a room, small and barely furnished, in which a little, thin man was standing with his back to the fireplace. He was much below the middle height, but his large head, which seemed to hang loosely on his body, gave him an odd ungainliness. His features were wide and flattened, and he had prominent, pale eyes; his thin hair was sandy; he wore whiskers that grew unevenly on his face, and in places where you would have expected the hair to grow thickly there was no hair at all. His skin was pasty and yellow. He held out his hand to Philip, and when he smiled showed badly decayed teeth. He spoke with a patronising and at the same time a timid air, as though he sought to assume an importance which he did not feel. He said he hoped Philip would like the work; there was a good deal of drudgery about it, but when you got used to it, it was interesting; and one made money, that was the chief thing, wasn't it? He laughed with his odd mixture of superiority and shyness.

"Mr. Carter will be here presently," he said. "He's a little late on Monday mornings sometimes. I'll call you when he comes. In the meantime I must give you something to do. Do you know anything about book-keeping or accounts?"

"I'm afraid not," answered Philip.

"I didn't suppose you would. They don't teach you things at school that are much use in business, I'm afraid." He considered for a moment. "I think I can find you something to do."

He went into the next room and after a little while came out with a large cardboard box. It contained a vast number of letters

in great disorder, and he told Philip to sort them out and arrange them alphabetically according to the names of the writers.

"I'll take you to the room in which the articled clerk generally sits. There's a very nice fellow in it. His name is Watson. He's a son of Watson, Crag, and Thompson—you know—the brewers. He's spending a year with us to learn business."

Mr. Goodworthy led Philip through the dingy office, where now six or eight clerks were working, into a narrow room behind. It had been made into a separate apartment by a glass partition, and here they found Watson sitting back in a chair, reading *The Sportsman*. He was a large, stout young man, elegantly dressed, and he looked up as Mr. Goodworthy entered. He asserted his position by calling the managing clerk Goodworthy. The managing clerk objected to the familiarity, and pointedly called him Mr. Watson, but Watson, instead of seeing that it was a rebuke, accepted the title as a tribute to his gentlemanliness.

"I see they've scratched Rigoletto," he said to Philip, as soon as they were left alone.

"Have they?" said Philip, who knew nothing about horse-racing.

He looked with awe upon Watson's beautiful clothes. His tail-coat fitted him perfectly, and there was a valuable pin artfully stuck in the middle of an enormous tie. On the chimney-piece rested his tall hat; it was saucy and bell-shaped and shiny. Philip felt himself very shabby. Watson began to talk of hunting—it was such an infernal bore having to waste one's time in an infernal office, he would only be able to hunt on Saturdays—and shooting: he had ripping invitations all over the country and of course he had to refuse them. It was infernal luck, but he wasn't going to put up with it long; he was only in this infernal hole for a year, and then he was going into the business, and he would hunt four days a week and get all the shooting there was.

"You've got five years of it, haven't you?" he said, waving his arm round the tiny room.

"I suppose so," said Philip.

"I daresay I shall see something of you. Carter does our accounts, you know."

Philip was somewhat overpowered by the young gentleman's condescension. At Blackstable they had always looked upon brewing with civil contempt, the Vicar made little jokes about the beerage, and it was a surprising experience for Philip to discover that Watson was such an important and magnificent fellow. He had been to Winchester and to Oxford, and his conversation impressed the fact upon one with frequency. When he discovered

the details of Philip's education his manner became more patronising still.

"Of course, if one doesn't go to a public school those sort of schools are the next best thing, aren't they?"

Philip asked about the other men in the office.

"Oh, I don't bother about them much, you know," said Watson. "Carter's not a bad sort. We have him to dine now and then. All the rest are awful bounders."

Presently Watson applied himself to some work he had in hand, and Philip set about sorting his letters. Then Mr. Goodworthy came in to say that Mr. Carter had arrived. He took Philip into a large room next door to his own. There was a big desk in it, and a couple of big arm-chairs; a Turkey carpet adorned the floor, and the walls were decorated with sporting prints. Mr. Carter was sitting at the desk and got up to shake hands with Philip. He was dressed in a long frock coat. He looked like a military man; his moustache was waxed, his gray hair was short and neat, he held himself upright, he talked in a breezy way, he lived at Enfield. He was very keen on games and the good of the country. He was an officer in the Hertfordshire Yeomanry and chairman of the Conservative Association. When he was told that a local magnate had said no one would take him for a City man, he felt that he had not lived in vain. He talked to Philip in a pleasant, off-hand fashion. Mr. Goodworthy would look after him. Watson was a nice fellow, perfect gentleman, good sportsman—did Philip hunt? Pity, *the* sport for gentlemen. Didn't have much chance of hunting now, had to leave that to his son. His son was at Cambridge, he'd sent him to Rugby, fine school Rugby, nice class of boys there, in a couple of years his son would be articled, that would be nice for Philip, he'd like his son, thorough sportsman. He hoped Philip would get on well and like the work, he mustn't miss his lectures, they were getting up the tone of the profession, they wanted gentlemen in it. Well, well, Mr. Goodworthy was there. If he wanted to know anything Mr. Goodworthy would tell him. What was his handwriting like? Ah well, Mr. Goodworthy would see about that.

Philip was overwhelmed by so much gentlemanliness: in East Anglia they knew who were gentlemen and who weren't, but the gentlemen didn't talk about it.

XXXVII

At first the novelty of the work kept Philip interested. Mr. Carter dictated letters to him, and he had to make fair copies of statements of accounts.

Mr. Carter preferred to conduct the office on gentlemanly lines; he would have nothing to do with typewriting and looked upon shorthand with disfavour: the office-boy knew shorthand, but it was only Mr. Goodworthy who made use of his accomplishment. Now and then Philip with one of the more experienced clerks went out to audit the accounts of some firm: he came to know which of the clients must be treated with respect and which were in low water. Now and then long lists of figures were given him to add up. He attended lectures for his first examination. Mr. Goodworthy repeated to him that the work was dull at first, but he would grow used to it. Philip left the office at six and walked across the river to Waterloo. His supper was waiting for him when he reached his lodgings and he spent the evening reading. On Saturday afternoons he went to the National Gallery. Hayward had recommended to him a guide which had been compiled out of Ruskin's works, and with this in hand he went industriously through room after room: he read carefully what the critic had said about a picture and then in a determined fashion set himself to see the same things in it. His Sundays were difficult to get through. He knew no one in London and spent them by himself. Mr. Nixon, the solicitor, asked him to spend a Sunday at Hampstead, and Philip passed a happy day with a set of exuberant strangers; he ate and drank a great deal, took a walk on the heath, and came away with a general invitation to come again whenever he liked; but he was morbidly afraid of being in the way, so waited for a formal invitation. Naturally enough it never came, for with numbers of friends of their own the Nixons did not think of the lonely, silent boy whose claim upon their hospitality was so small. So on Sundays he got up late and took a walk along the tow-path. At Barnes the river is muddy, dingy, and tidal; it has neither the graceful charm of the Thames above the locks nor the romance of the crowded stream below London Bridge. In the afternoon he walked about the common; and that is gray and dingy too; it is neither country nor town; the gorse is

stunted; and all about is the litter of civilisation. He went to a play every Saturday night and stood cheerfully for an hour or more at the gallery-door. It was not worth while to go back to Barnes for the interval between the closing of the Museum and his meal in an A. B. C. shop, and the time hung heavily on his hands. He strolled up Bond Street or through the Burlington Arcade, and when he was tired went and sat down in the Park or in wet weather in the public library in St. Martin's Lane. He looked at the people walking about and envied them because they had friends; sometimes his envy turned to hatred because they were happy and he was miserable. He had never imagined that it was possible to be so lonely in a great city. Sometimes when he was standing at the gallery-door the man next to him would attempt a conversation; but Philip had the country boy's suspicion of strangers and answered in such a way as to prevent any further acquaintance. After the play was over, obliged to keep to himself all he thought about it, he hurried across the bridge to Waterloo. When he got back to his rooms, in which for economy no fire had been lit, his heart sank. It was horribly cheerless. He began to loathe his lodgings and the long solitary evenings he spent in them. Sometimes he felt so lonely that he could not read, and then he sat looking into the fire hour after hour in bitter wretchedness.

He had spent three months in London now, and except for that one Sunday at Hampstead had never talked to anyone but his fellow-clerks. One evening Watson asked him to dinner at a restaurant and they went to a music-hall together; but he felt shy and uncomfortable. Watson talked all the time of things he did not care about, and while he looked upon Watson as a Philistine he could not help admiring him. He was angry because Watson obviously set no store on his culture, and with his way of taking himself at the estimate at which he saw others held him he began to despise the acquirements which till then had seemed to him not unimportant. He felt for the first time the humiliation of poverty. His uncle sent him fourteen pounds a month and he had had to buy a good many clothes. His evening suit cost him five guineas. He had not dared tell Watson that it was bought in the Strand. Watson said there was only one tailor in London.

"I suppose you don't dance," said Watson, one day, with a glance at Philip's club-foot.

"No," said Philip.

"Pity. I've been asked to bring some dancing men to a ball. I could have introduced you to some jolly girls."

Once or twice, hating the thought of going back to Barnes,

Philip had remained in town, and late in the evening wandered through the West End till be found some house at which there was a party. He stood among the little group of shabby people, behind the footmen, watching the guests arrive, and he listened to the music that floated through the window. Sometimes, notwithstanding the cold, a couple came on to the balcony and stood for a moment to get some fresh air; and Philip, imagining that they were in love with one another, turned away and limped along the street with a heavy heart. He would never be able to stand in that man's place. He felt that no woman could ever really look upon him without distaste for his deformity.

That reminded him of Miss Wilkinson. He thought of her without satisfaction. Before parting they had made an arrangement that she should write to Charing Cross Post Office till he was able to send her an address, and when he went there he found three letters from her. She wrote on blue paper with violet ink, and she wrote in French. Philip wondered why she could not write in English like a sensible woman, and her passionate expressions, because they reminded him of a French novel, left him cold. She upbraided him for not having written, and when he answered he excused himself by saying that he had been busy. He did not quite know how to start the letter. He could not bring himself to use *dearest* or *darling,* and he hated to address her as Emily, so finally he began with the word *dear.* It looked odd, standing by itself, and rather silly, but he made it do. It was the first love letter he had ever written, and he was conscious of its tameness; he felt that he should say all sorts of vehement things, how he thought of her every minute of the day and how he longed to kiss her beautiful hands and how he trembled at the thought of her red lips, but some inexplicable modesty prevented him; and instead he told her of his new rooms and his office. The answer came by return of post, angry, heart-broken, reproachful: how could he be so cold? Did he not know that she hung on his letters? She had given him all that a woman could give, and this was her reward. Was he tired of her already? Then, because he did not reply for several days, Miss Wilkinson bombarded him with letters. She could not bear his unkindness, she waited for the post, and it never brought her his letter, she cried herself to sleep night after night, she was looking so ill that everyone remarked on it: if he did not love her why did he not say so? She added that she could not live without him, and the only thing was for her to commit suicide. She told him he was cold and selfish and ungrateful. It was all in French, and Philip knew that she wrote in that

language to show off, but he was worried all the same. He did not want to make her unhappy. In a little while she wrote that she could not bear the separation any longer, she would arrange to come over to London for Christmas. Philip wrote back that he would like nothing better, only he had already an engagement to spend Christmas with friends in the country, and he did not see how he could break it. She answered that she did not wish to force herself on him, it was quite evident that he did not wish to see her; she was deeply hurt, and she never thought he would repay with such cruelty all her kindness. Her letter was touching, and Philip thought he saw marks of her tears on the paper; he wrote an impulsive reply saying that he was dreadfully sorry and imploring her to come; but it was with relief that he received her answer in which she said that she found it would be impossible for her to get away. Presently when her letters came his heart sank: he delayed opening them, for he knew what they would contain, angry reproaches and pathetic appeals; they would make him feel a perfect beast, and yet he did not see with what he had to blame himself. He put off his answer from day to day, and then another letter would come, saying she was ill and lonely and miserable.

"I wish to God I'd never had anything to do with her," he said.

He admired Watson because he arranged these things so easily. The young man had been engaged in an intrigue with a girl who played in touring companies, and his account of the affair filled Philip with envious amazement. But after a time Watson's young affections changed, and one day he described the rupture to Philip.

"I thought it was no good making any bones about it so I just told her I'd had enough of her," he said.

"Didn't she make an awful scene?" asked Philip.

"The usual thing, you know, but I told her it was no good trying on that sort of thing with me."

"Did she cry?"

"She began to, but I can't stand women when they cry, so I said she'd better hook it."

Philip's sense of humour was growing keener with advancing years.

"And did she hook it?" he asked smiling.

"Well, there wasn't anything else for her to do, was there?"

Meanwhile the Christmas holidays approached. Mrs. Carey had been ill all through November, and the doctor suggested that she and the Vicar should go to Cornwall for a couple of weeks

round Christmas so that she should get back her strength. The result was that Philip had nowhere to go, and he spent Christmas Day in his lodgings. Under Hayward's influence he had persuaded himself that the festivities that attend this season were vulgar and barbaric, and he made up his mind that he would take no notice of the day; but when it came, the jollity of all around affected him strangely. His landlady and her husband were spending the day with a married daughter, and to save trouble Philip announced that he would take his meals out. He went up to London towards mid-day and ate a slice of turkey and some Christmas pudding by himself at Gatti's, and since he had nothing to do afterwards went to Westminster Abbey for the afternoon service. The streets were almost empty, and the people who went along had a preoccupied look; they did not saunter but walked with some definite goal in view, and hardly anyone was alone. To Philip they all seemed happy. He felt himself more solitary than he had ever done in his life. His intention had been to kill the day somehow in the streets and then dine at a restaurant, but he could not face again the sight of cheerful people, talking, laughing, and making merry; so he went back to Waterloo, and on his way through the Westminster Bridge Road bought some ham and a couple of mince pies and went back to Barnes. He ate his food in his lonely little room and spent the evening with a book. His depression was almost intolerable.

When he was back at the office it made him very sore to listen to Watson's account of the short holiday. They had had some jolly girls staying with them, and after dinner they had cleared out the drawing-room and had a dance.

"I didn't get to bed till three and I don't know how I got there then. By George, I was squiffy."

At last Philip asked desperately:

"How does one get to know people in London?"

Watson looked at him with surprise and with a slightly contemptuous amusement.

"Oh, I don't know, one just knows them. If you go to dances you soon get to know as many people as you can do with."

Philip hated Watson, and yet he would have given anything to change places with him. The old feeling that he had had at school came back to him, and he tried to throw himself into the other's skin, imagining what life would be if he were Watson.

XXXVIII

At the end of the year there was a great deal to do. Philip went to various places with a clerk named Thompson and spent the day monotonously calling out items of expenditure, which the other checked; and sometimes he was given long pages of figures to add up. He had never had a head for figures, and he could only do this slowly. Thompson grew irritated at his mistakes. His fellow-clerk was a long, lean man of forty, sallow, with black hair and a ragged moustache; he had hollow cheeks and deep lines on each side of his nose. He took a dislike to Philip because he was an articled clerk. Because he could put down three hundred guineas and keep himself for five years Philip had the chance of a career; while he, with his experience and ability, had no possibility of ever being more than a clerk at thirty-five shillings a week. He was a cross-grained man, oppressed by a large family, and he resented the superciliousness which he fancied he saw in Philip. He sneered at Philip because he was better educated than himself, and he mocked at Philip's pronunciation; he could not forgive him because he spoke without a cockney accent, and when he talked to him sarcastically exaggerated his aitches. At first his manner was merely gruff and repellent, but as he discovered that Philip had no gift for accountancy he took pleasure in humiliating him; his attacks were gross and silly, but they wounded Philip, and in self-defence he assumed an attitude of superiority which he did not feel.

"Had a bath this morning?" Thompson said when Philip came to the office late, for his early punctuality had not lasted.

"Yes, haven't you?"

"No, I'm not a gentleman, I'm only a clerk. I have a bath on Saturday night."

"I suppose that's why you're more than usually disagreeable on Monday."

"Will you condescend to do a few sums in simple addition today? I'm afraid it's asking a great deal from a gentleman who knows Latin and Greek."

"Your attempts at sarcasm are not very happy."

But Philip could not conceal from himself that the other clerks, ill-paid and uncouth, were more useful than himself. Once or twice Mr. Goodworthy grew impatient with him.

"You really ought to be able to do better than this by now," he said. "You're not even as smart as the office-boy."

Philip listened sulkily. He did not like being blamed, and it humiliated him, when, having been given accounts to make fair copies of, Mr. Goodworthy was not satisfied and gave them to another clerk to do. At first the work had been tolerable from its novelty, but now it grew irksome; and when he discovered that he had no aptitude for it, he began to hate it. Often, when he should have been doing something that was given him, he wasted his time drawing little pictures on the office note-paper. He made sketches of Watson in every conceivable attitude, and Watson was impressed by his talent. It occurred to him to take the drawings home, and he came back next day with the praises of his family.

"I wonder you didn't become a painter," he said. "Only of course there's no money in it."

It chanced that Mr. Carter two or three days later was dining with the Watsons, and the sketches were shown him. The following morning he sent for Philip. Philip saw him seldom and stood in some awe of him.

"Look here, young fellow, I don't care what you do out of office-hours, but I've seen those sketches of yours and they're on office-paper, and Mr. Goodworthy tells me you're slack. You won't do any good as a chartered accountant unless you look alive. It's a fine profession, and we're getting a very good class of men in it, but it's a profession in which you have to . . ." he looked for the termination of his phrase, but could not find exactly what he wanted, so finished rather tamely, "in which you have to look alive."

Perhaps Philip would have settled down but for the agreement that if he did not like the work he could leave after a year and get back half the money paid for his articles. He felt that he was fit for something better than to add up accounts, and it was humiliating that he did so ill something which seemed contemptible. The vulgar scenes with Thompson got on his nerves. In March Watson ended his year at the office and Philip, though he did not care for him, saw him go with regret. The fact that the other clerks disliked them equally, because they belonged to a class a little higher than their own, was a bond of union. When Philip thought that he must spent over four years more with that dreary set of fellows his heart sank. He had expected wonderful things from London and it had given him nothing. He hated it now. He did not know a soul, and

he had no idea how he was to get to know anyone. He was tired of going everywhere by himself. He began to feel that he could not stand much more of such a life. He would lie in bed at night and think of the joy of never seeing again that dingy office or any of the men in it, and of getting away from those drab lodgings.

A great disappointment befell him in the spring. Hayward had announced his intention of coming to London for the season, and Philip had looked forward very much to seeing him again. He had read so much lately and thought so much that his mind was full of ideas which he wanted to discuss, and he knew nobody who was willing to interest himself in abstract things. He was quite excited at the thought of talking his fill with someone, and he was wretched when Hayward wrote to say that the spring was lovelier than ever he had known it in Italy, and he could not bear to tear himself away. He went on to ask why Philip did not come. What was the use of squandering the days of his youth in an office when the world was beautiful? The letter proceeded.

I wonder you can bear it. I think of Fleet Street and Lincoln's Inn now with a shudder of disgust. There are only two things in the world that make life worth living, love and art. I cannot imagine you sitting in an office over a ledger, and do you wear a tall hat and an umbrella and a little black bag? My feeling is that one should look upon life as an adventure, one should burn with the hard, gem-like flame, and one should take risks, one should expose oneself to danger. Why do you not go to Paris and study art? I always thought you had talent."

The suggestion fell in with the possibility that Philip for some time had been vaguely turning over in his mind. It startled him at first, but he could not help thinking of it, and in the constant rumination over it he found his only escape from the wretchedness of his present state. They all thought he had talent; at Heidelberg they had admired his water colours, Miss Wilkinson had told him over and over again that they were charming; even strangers like the Watsons had been struck by his sketches. *La Vie de Bohème* had made a deep impression on him. He had brought it to London and when he was most depressed he had only to read a few pages to be transported into those charming attics where Rodolphe and the rest of them danced and loved and sang. He began to think of Paris as before he had thought of London, but

he had no fear of a second disillusion; he yearned for romance and beauty and love, and Paris seemed to offer them all. He had a passion for pictures, and why should he not be able to paint as well as anybody else? He wrote to Miss Wilkinson and asked her how much she thought he could live on in Paris. She told him that he could manage easily on eighty pounds a year, and she enthusiastically approved of his project. She told him he was too good to be wasted in an office. Who would be a clerk when he might be a great artist, she asked dramatically, and she besought Philip to believe in himself: that was the great thing. But Philip had a cautious nature. It was all very well for Hayward to talk of taking risks, he had three hundred a year in gilt-edged securities; Philip's entire fortune amounted to no more than eighteen-hundred pounds. He hesitated.

Then it chanced that one day Mr. Goodworthy asked him suddenly if he would like to go to Paris. The firm did the accounts for a hotel in the Faubourg St. Honoré, which was owned by an English company, and twice a year Mr. Goodworthy and a clerk went over. The clerk who generally went happened to be ill, and a press of work prevented any of the others from getting away. Mr. Goodworthy thought of Philip because he could best be spared, and his articles gave him some claim upon a job which was one of the pleasures of the business. Philip was delighted.

"You'll 'ave to work all day," said Mr. Goodworthy, "but we get our evenings to ourselves, and Paris is Paris." He smiled in a knowing way. "They do us very well at the hotel, and they give us all our meals, so it don't cost one anything. That's the way I like going to Paris, at other people's expense."

When they arrived at Calais and Philip saw the crowd of gesticulating porters his heart leaped.

"This is the real thing," he said to himself.

He was all eyes as the train sped through the country; he adored the sand dunes, their colour seemed to him more lovely than anything he had ever seen; and he was enchanted with the canals and the long lines of poplars. When they got out of the Gare du Nord, and trundled along the cobbled streets in a ramshackle, noisy cab, it seemed to him that he was breathing a new air so intoxicating that he could hardly restrain himself from shouting aloud. They were met at the door of the hotel by the manager, a stout, pleasant man, who spoke tolerable English; Mr. Goodworthy was an old friend and he greeted them effusively; they dined in his private room with his wife, and to Philip it

seemed that he had never eaten anything so delicious as the *beefsteak aux pommes,* nor drunk such nectar as the *vin ordinaire,* which were set before them.

To Mr. Goodworthy, a respectable householder with excellent principles, the capital of France was a paradise of the joyously obscene. He asked the manager next morning what there was to be seen that was 'thick.' He thoroughly enjoyed these visits of his to Paris; he said they kept you from growing rusty. In the evenings, after their work was over and they had dined, he took Philip to the Moulin Rouge and the Folies Bergères. His little eyes twinkled and his face wore a sly, sensual smile as he sought out the pornographic. He went into all the haunts which were specially arranged for the foreigner, and afterwards said that a nation could come to no good which permitted that sort of thing. He nudged Philip when at some revue a woman appeared with practically nothing on, and pointed out to him the most strapping of the courtesans who walked about the hall. It was a vulgar Paris that he showed Philip, but Philip saw it with eyes blinded with illusion. In the early morning he would rush out of the hotel and go to the Champs Élysées, and stand at the Place de la Concorde. It was June, and Paris was silvery with the delicacy of the air. Philip felt his heart go out to the people. Here he thought at last was romance.

They spent the inside of a week there, leaving on Sunday, and when Philip late at night reached his dingy rooms in Barnes his mind was made up; he would surrender his articles, and go to Paris to study art; but so that no one should think him unreasonable he determined to stay at the office till his year was up. He was to have his holiday during the last fortnight in August, and when he went away he would tell Herbert Carter that he had no intention of returning. But though Philip could force himself to go to the office every day he could not even pretend to show any interest in the work. His mind was occupied with the future. After the middle of July there was nothing much to do and he escaped a good deal by pretending he had to go to lectures for his first examination. The time he got in this way he spent in the National Gallery. He read books about Paris and books about painting. He was steeped in Ruskin. He read many of Vasari's lives of the painters. He liked that story of Correggio, and he fancied himself standing before some great masterpiece and crying: *Anch 'io son' pittore.* His hesitation had left him now, and he was convinced that he had in him the makings of a great painter.

"After all, I can only try," he said to himself. "The great thing in life is to take risks."

At last came the middle of August. Mr. Carter was spending the month in Scotland, and the managing clerk was in charge of the office. Mr. Goodworthy had seemed pleasantly disposed to Philip since their trip to Paris, and now that Philip knew he was so soon to be free, he could look upon the funny little man with tolerance.

"You're going for your holiday tomorrow, Carey?" he said to him in the evening.

All day Philip had been telling himself that this was the last time he would ever sit in that hateful office.

"Yes, this is the end of my year."

"I'm afraid you've not done very well. Mr. Carter's very dissatisfied with you."

"Not nearly so dissatisfied as I am with Mr. Carter," returned Philip cheerfully.

"I don't think you should speak like that, Carey."

"I'm not coming back. I made the arrangement that if I didn't like accountancy Mr. Carter would return me half the money I paid for my articles and I could chuck it at the end of a year."

"You shouldn't come to such a decision hastily."

"For ten months I've loathed it all, I've loathed the work, I've loathed the office, I loathe London. I'd rather sweep a crossing than spend my days here."

"Well, I must say, I don't think you're very fitted for accountancy."

"Good-bye," said Philip, holding out his hand. "I want to thank you for your kindness to me. I'm sorry if I've been troublesome. I knew almost from the beginning I was no good."

"Well, if you really do make up your mind it is good-bye. I don't know what you're going to do, but if you're in the neighbourhood at any time come in and see us."

Philip gave a little laugh.

"I'm afraid it sounds very rude, but I hope from the bottom of my heart that I shall never set eyes on any of you again."

XXXIX

THE Vicar of Blackstable would have nothing to do with the scheme which Philip laid before him. He had a great idea that one should stick to whatever one had begun. Like all weak men he laid an exaggerated stress on not changing one's mind.

"You chose to be an accountant of your own free will," he said.

"I just took that because it was the only chance I saw of getting up to town. I hate London, I hate the work, and nothing will induce me to go back to it."

Mr. and Mrs. Carey were frankly shocked at Philip's idea of being an artist. He should not forget, they said, that his father and mother were gentlefolk, and painting wasn't a serious profession; it was Bohemian, disreputable, immoral. And then Paris!

"So long as I have anything to say in the matter, I shall not allow you to live in Paris," said the Vicar firmly.

It was a sink of iniquity. The scarlet woman and she of Babylon flaunted their vileness there; the cities of the plain were not more wicked.

"You've been brought up like a gentleman and a Christian, and I should be false to the trust laid upon me by your dead father and mother if I allowed you to expose yourself to such temptation."

"Well, I know I'm not a Christian and I'm beginning to doubt whether I'm a gentleman," said Philip.

The dispute grew more violent. There was another year before Philip took possession of his small inheritance, and during that time Mr. Carey proposed only to give him an allowance if he remained at the office. It was clear to Philip that if he meant not to continue with accountancy he must leave it while he could still get back half the money that had been paid for his articles. The Vicar would not listen. Philip, losing all reserve, said things to wound and irritate.

"You've got no right to waste my money," he said at last "After all it's my money, isn't it? I'm not a child. You can't prevent me from going to Paris if I make up my mind to. You can't force me to go back to London."

"All I can do is to refuse you money unless you do what I think fit."

"Well, I don't care, I've made up my mind to go to Paris. I shall sell my clothes, and my books, and my father's jewellery."

Aunt Louisa sat by in silence, anxious and unhappy: she saw that Philip was beside himself, and anything she said then would but increase his anger. Finally the Vicar announced that he wished to hear nothing more about it and with dignity left the room. For the next three days neither Philip nor he spoke to one another. Philip wrote to Hayward for information about Paris, and made up his mind to set out as soon as he got a reply. Mrs. Carey turned the matter over in her mind incessantly; she felt that Philip included her in the hatred he bore her husband, and the thought tortured her. She loved him with all her heart. At length she spoke to him; she listened attentively while he poured out all his disillusionment of London and his eager ambition for the future.

"I may be no good, but at least let me have a try. I can't be a worse failure than I was in that beastly office. And I feel that I *can* paint. I know I've got it in me."

She was not so sure as her husband that they did right in thwarting so strong an inclination. She had read of great painters whose parents had opposed their wish to study, the event had shown with what folly; and after all it was just as possible for a painter to lead a virtuous life to the glory of God as for a chartered accountant.

"I'm so afraid of your going to Paris," she said piteously. "It wouldn't be so bad if you studied in London."

"If I'm going in for painting I must do it thoroughly, and it's only in Paris that you can get the real thing."

At his suggestion Mrs. Carey wrote to the solicitor, saying that Philip was discontented with his work in London, and asking what he thought of a change. Mr. Nixon answered as follows:

Dear Mrs. Carey,

I have seen Mr. Herbert Carter, and I am afraid I must tell you that Philip has not done so well as one could have wished. If he is very strongly set against the work, perhaps it is better that he should take the opportunity there is now to break his articles. I am naturally very disappointed, but as you know you can take a horse to the water, but you can't make him drink.

Yours very sincerely,

Albert Nixon.

The letter was shown to the Vicar, but served only to increase his obstinacy. He was willing enough that Philip should take

up some other profession, he suggested his father's calling, medicine, but nothing would induce him to pay an allowance if Philip went to Paris.

"It's a mere excuse for self-indulgence and sensuality," he said.

"I'm interested to hear you blame self-indulgence in others," retorted Philip acidly.

But by this time an answer had come from Hayward, giving the name of a hotel where Philip could get a room for thirty francs a month and enclosing a note of introduction to the *massière* of a school. Philip read the letter to Mrs. Carey and told her he proposed to start on the first of September.

"But you haven't got any money?" she said.

"I'm going into Tercanbury this afternoon to sell the jewellery."

He had inherited from his father a gold watch and chain, two or three rings, some links, and two pins. One of them was a pearl and might fetch a considerable sum.

"It's a very different thing, what a thing's worth and what it'll fetch," said Aunt Louisa.

Philip smiled, for this was one of his uncle's stock phrases.

"I know, but at the worst I think I can get a hundred pounds on the lot, and that'll keep me till I'm twenty-one."

Mrs. Carey did not answer, but she went upstairs, put on her little black bonnet, and went to the bank. In an hour she came back. She went to Philip, who was reading in the drawing-room, and handed him an envelope.

"What's this?" he asked.

"It's a little present for you," she answered, smiling shyly.

He opened it and found eleven five-pound notes and a little paper sack bulging with sovereigns.

"I couldn't bear to let you sell your father's jewellery. It's the money I had in the bank. It comes to very nearly a hundred pounds."

Philip blushed, and, he knew not why, tears suddenly filled his eyes.

"Oh, my dear, I can't take it," he said. "It's most awfully good of you, but I couldn't bear to take it."

When Mrs. Carey was married she had three hundred pounds, and this money, carefully watched, had been used by her to meet any unforeseen expense, any urgent charity, or to buy Christmas and birthday presents for her husband and for Philip. In the course of years it had diminished sadly, but it was still with the

Vicar a subject for jesting. He talked of his wife as a rich woman and he constantly spoke of the 'nest egg.'

"Oh, please take it, Philip. I'm so sorry I've been extravagant, and there's only that left. But it'll make me so happy if you'll accept it."

"But you'll want it," said Philip.

"No, I don't think I shall. I was keeping it in case your uncle died before me. I thought it would be useful to have a little something I could get at immediately if I wanted it, but I don't think I shall live very much longer now."

"Oh, my dear, don't say that. Why, of course you're going to live for ever. I can't possibly spare you."

"Oh, I'm not sorry." Her voice broke and she hid her eyes, but in a moment, drying them, she smiled bravely. "At first, I used to pray to God that He might not take me first, because I didn't want your uncle to be left alone, I didn't want him to have all the suffering, but now I know that it wouldn't mean so much to your uncle as it would mean to me. He wants to live more than I do, I've never been the wife he wanted, and I daresay he'd marry again if anything happened to me. So I should like to go first. You don't think it's selfish of me, Philip, do you? But I couldn't bear it if he went."

Philip kissed her wrinkled, thin cheek. He did not know why the sight he had of that overwhelming love made him feel strangely ashamed. It was incomprehensible that she should care so much for a man who was so indifferent, so selfish, so grossly self-indulgent; and he divined dimly that in her heart she knew his indifference and his selfishness, knew them and loved him humbly all the same.

"You will take the money, Philip?" she said, gently stroking his hand. "I know you can do without it, but it'll give me so much happiness. I've always wanted to do something for you. You see, I never had a child of my own, and I've loved you as if you were my son. When you were a little boy, though I knew it was wicked, I used to wish almost that you might be ill, so that I could nurse you day and night. But you were only ill once and then it was at school. I should so like to help you. It's the only chance I shall ever have. And perhaps some day when you're a great artist you won't forget me, but you'll remember that I gave you your start."

"It's very good of you," said Philip. "I'm very grateful."

A smile came into her tired eyes, a smile of pure happiness.

"Oh, I'm so glad."

XL

A FEW days later Mrs. Carey went to the station to see Philip off. She stood at the door of the carriage, trying to keep back her tears. Philip was restless and eager. He wanted to be gone.

"Kiss me once more," she said.

He leaned out of the window and kissed her. The train started, and she stood on the wooden platform of the little station, waving her handkerchief till it was out of sight. Her heart was dreadfully heavy, and the few hundred yards to the vicarage seemed very, very long. It was natural enough that he should be eager to go, she thought, he was a boy and the future beckoned to him; but she—she clenched her teeth so that she should not cry. She uttered a little inward prayer that God would guard him, and keep him out of temptation, and give him happiness and good fortune.

But Philip ceased to think of her a moment after he had settled down in his carriage. He thought only of the future. He had written to Mrs. Otter, the *massière* to whom Hayward had given him an introduction, and had in his pocket an invitation to tea on the following day. When he arrived in Paris he had his luggage put on a cab and trundled off slowly through the gay streets, over the bridge, and along the narrow ways of the Latin Quarter. He had taken a room at the Hôtel des Deux Écoles, which was in a shabby street off the Boulevard du Montparnasse; it was convenient for Amitrano's School at which he was going to work. A waiter took his box up five flights of stairs, and Philip was shown into a tiny room, fusty from unopened windows, the greater part of which was taken up by a large wooden bed with a canopy over it of red rep; there were heavy curtains on the windows of the same dingy material; the chest of drawers served also as a washing-stand; and there was a massive wardrobe of the style which is connected with the good King Louis Philippe. The wall-paper was discoloured with age; it was dark gray, and there could be vaguely seen on it garlands of brown leaves. To Philip the room seemed quaint and charming.

Though it was late he felt too excited to sleep and, going out, made his way into the boulevard and walked towards the light. This led him to the station; and the square in front of it, vivid with arc-lamps, noisy with the yellow trams that seemed to cross it

in all directions, made him laugh aloud with joy. There were cafés all round, and by chance, thirsty and eager to get a nearer sight of the crowd, Philip installed himself at a little table outside the Café de Versailles. Every other table was taken, for it was a fine night; and Philip looked curiously at the people, here little family groups, there a knot of men with odd-shaped hats and beards talking loudly and gesticulating; next to him were two men who looked like painters with women who Philip hoped were not their lawful wives; behind him he heard Americans loudly arguing on art. His soul was thrilled. He sat till very late, tired out but too happy to move, and when at last he went to bed he was wide awake; he listened to the manifold noise of Paris.

Next day about tea-time he made his way to the Lion de Belfort, and in a new street that led out of the Boulevard Raspail found Mrs. Otter. She was an insignificant woman of thirty, with a provincial air and a deliberately lady-like manner; she introduced him to her mother. He discovered presently that she had been studying in Paris for three years and later that she was separated from her husband. She had in her small drawing-room one or two portraits which she had painted, and to Philip's inexperience they seemed extremely accomplished.

"I wonder if I shall ever be able to paint as well as that," he said to her.

"Oh, I expect so," she replied, not without self-satisfaction. "You can't expect to do everything all at once, of course."

She was very kind. She gave him the address of a shop where he could get a portfolio, drawing-paper, and charcoal.

"I shall be going to Amitrano's about nine tomorrow, and if you'll be there then I'll see that you get a good place and all that sort of thing."

She asked him what he wanted to do, and Philip felt that he should not let her see how vague he was about the whole matter.

"Well, first I want to learn to draw," he said.

"I'm so glad to hear you say that. People always want to do things in such a hurry. I never touched oils till I'd been here for two years, and look at the result."

She gave a glance at the portrait of her mother, a sticky piece of painting that hung over the piano.

"And if I were you, I would be very careful about the people you get to know. I wouldn't mix myself up with any foreigners. I'm very careful myself."

Philip thanked her for the suggestion, but it seemed to him odd. He did not know that he particularly wanted to be careful.

"We live just as we would if we were in England," said Mrs. Otter's mother, who till then had spoken little. "When we came here we brought all our own furniture over."

Philip looked round the room. It was filled with a massive suite, and at the window were the same sort of white lace curtains which Aunt Louisa put up at the vicarage in summer. The piano was draped in Liberty silk and so was the chimney-piece. Mrs. Otter followed his wandering eye.

"In the evening when we close the shutters one might really feel one was in England."

"And we have our meals just as if we were at home," added her mother. "A meat breakfast in the morning and dinner in the middle of the day."

When he left Mrs. Otter Philip went to buy drawing materials; and next morning at the stroke of nine, trying to seem self-assured, he presented himself at the school. Mrs. Otter was already there, and she came forward with a friendly smile. He had been anxious about the reception he would have as a *nouveau,* for he had read a good deal of the rough joking to which a newcomer was exposed at some of the studios; but Mrs. Otter had reassured him.

"Oh, there's nothing like that here," she said. "You see, about half our students are ladies, and they set a tone to the place."

The studio was large and bare, with gray walls, on which were pinned the studies that had received prizes. A model was sitting in a chair with a loose wrap thrown over her, and about a dozen men and women were standing about, some talking and others still working on their sketch. It was the first rest of the model.

"You'd better not try anything too difficult at first," said Mrs. Otter. "Put your easel here. You'll find that's the easiest pose."

Philip placed an easel where she indicated, and Mrs. Otter introduced him to a young woman who sat next to him.

"Mr. Carey,—Miss Price. Mr. Carey's never studied before, you won't mind helping him a little just at first, will you?" Then she turned to the model. "*La Pose.*"

The model threw aside the paper she had been reading, *La Petite République,* and sulkily, throwing off her gown, got on to the stand. She stood, squarely on both feet, with her hands clasped behind her head.

"It's a stupid pose," said Miss Price. "I can't imagine why they chose it."

When Philip entered, the people in the studio had looked at him curiously, and the model gave him an indifferent glance, but now they ceased to pay attention to him. Philip, with his beau-

tiful sheet of paper in front of him, stared awkwardly at the model. He did not know how to begin. He had never seen a naked woman before. She was not young and her breasts were shrivelled. She had colourless, fair hair that fell over her forehead untidily, and her face was covered with large freckles. He glanced at Miss Price's work. She had only been working on it two days, and it looked as though she had had trouble; her paper was in a mess from constant rubbing out, and to Philip's eyes the figure looked strangely distorted.

"I should have thought I could do as well as that," he said to himself.

He began on the head, thinking that he would work slowly downwards, but, he could not understand why, he found it infinitely more difficult to draw a head from the model than to draw one from his imagination. He got into difficulties. He glanced at Miss Price. She was working with vehement gravity. Her brow was wrinkled with eagerness, and there was an anxious look in her eyes. It was hot in the studio, and drops of sweat stood on her forehead. She was a girl of twenty-six, with a great deal of dull gold hair; it was handsome hair, but it was carelessly done, dragged back from her forehead and tied in a hurried knot. She had a large face, with broad, flat features and small eyes; her skin was pasty, with a singular unhealthiness of tone, and there was no colour in the cheeks. She had an unwashed air and you could not help wondering if she slept in her clothes. She was serious and silent. When the next pause came, she stepped back to look at her work.

"I don't know why I'm having so much bother," she said. "But I mean to get it right." She turned to Philip. "How are you getting on?"

"Not at all," he answered, with a rueful smile.

She looked at what he had done.

"You can't expect to do anything that way. You must take measurements. And you must square out your paper."

She showed him rapidly how to set about the business. Philip was impressed by her earnestness, but repelled by her want of charm. He was grateful for the hints she gave him and set to work again. Meanwhile other people had come in, mostly men, for the women always arrived first, and the studio for the time of year (it was early yet) was fairly full. Presently there came in a young man with thin, black hair, an enormous nose, and a face so long that it reminded you of a horse. He sat down next to Philip and nodded across him to Miss Price.

"You're very late," she said. "Are you only just up?"

"It was such a splendid day, I thought I'd lie in bed and think how beautiful it was out."

Philip smiled, but Miss Price took the remark seriously.

"That seems a funny thing to do, I should have thought it would be more to the point to get up and enjoy it."

"The way of the humorist is very hard," said the young man gravely.

He did not seem inclined to work. He looked at his canvas; he was working in colour, and had sketched in the day before the model who was posing. He turned to Philip.

"Have you just come out from England?"

"Yes."

"How did you find your way to Amitrano's?"

"It was the only school I knew of."

"I hope you haven't come with the idea that you will learn anything here which will be of the smallest use to you."

"It's the best school in Paris," said Miss Price. "It's the only one where they take art seriously."

"Should art be taken seriously?" the young man asked; and since Miss Price replied only with a scornful shrug, he added: "But the point is, all schools are bad. They are academical, obviously. Why this is less injurious than most is that the teaching is more incompetent than elsewhere. Because you learn nothing. . . ."

"But why d'you come here then?" interrupted Philip.

"I see the better course, but do not follow it. Miss Price, who is cultured, will remember the Latin of that."

"I wish you would leave me out of your conversation, Mr. Clutton," said Miss Price brusquely.

"The only way to learn to paint," he went on, imperturbable, "is to take a studio, hire a model, and just fight it out for yourself."

"That seems a simple thing to do," said Philip.

"It only needs money," replied Clutton.

He began to paint, and Philip looked at him from the corner of his eye. He was long and desperately thin; his huge bones seemed to protrude from his body; his elbows were so sharp that they appeared to jut out through the arms of his shabby coat. His trousers were frayed at the bottom, and on each of his boots was a clumsy patch. Miss Price got up and went over to Philip's easel.

"If Mr. Clutton will hold his tongue for a moment, I'll just help you a little," she said.

"Miss Price dislikes me because I have humour," said Clutton,

looking meditatively at his canvas, "but she detests me because I have genius."

He spoke with solemnity, and his colossal, misshapen nose made what he said very quaint. Philip was obliged to laugh, but Miss Price grew darkly red with anger.

"You're the only person who has ever accused you of genius."

"Also I am the only person whose opinion is of the least value to me."

Miss Price began to criticise what Philip had done. She talked glibly of anatomy and construction, planes and lines, and of much else which Philip did not understand. She had been at the studio a long time and knew the main points which the masters insisted upon, but though she could show what was wrong with Philip's work she could not tell him how to put it right.

"It's awfully kind of you to take so much trouble with me," said Philip.

"Oh, it's nothing," she answered, flushing awkwardly. "People did the same for me when I first came, I'd do it for anyone."

"Miss Price wants to indicate that she is giving you the advantage of her knowledge from a sense of duty rather than on account of any charms of your person," said Clutton.

Miss Price gave him a furious look, and went back to her own drawing. The clock struck twelve, and the model with a cry of relief stepped down from the stand.

Miss Price gathered up her things.

"Some of us go to Gravier's for lunch," she said to Philip, with a look at Clutton. "I always go home myself."

"I'll take you to Gravier's if you like," said Clutton.

Philip thanked him and made ready to go. On his way out Mrs. Otter asked him how he had been getting on.

"Did Fanny Price help you?" she asked. "I put you there because I know she can do it if she likes. She's a disagreeable, ill-natured girl, and she can't draw herself at all, but she knows the ropes, and she can be useful to a newcomer if she cares to take the trouble."

On their way down the street Clutton said to him:

"You've made an impression on Fanny Price. You'd better look out."

Philip laughed. He had never seen anyone on whom he wished less to make an impression. They came to the cheap little restaurant at which several of the students ate, and Clutton sat down at a table at which three or four men were already seated. For a franc, they got an egg, a plate of meat, cheese, and a small bottle

of wine. Coffee was extra. They sat on the pavement, and yellow trams passed up and down the boulevard with a ceaseless ringing of bells.

"By the way, what's your name?" said Clutton, as they took their seats.

"Carey."

"Allow me to introduce an old and trusted friend, Carey by name," said Clutton gravely. "Mr. Flanagan, Mr. Lawson."

They laughed and went on with their conversation. They talked of a thousand things, and they all talked at once. No one paid the smallest attention to anyone else. They talked of the places they had been to in the summer, of studios, of the various schools; they mentioned names which were unfamiliar to Philip. Monet, Manet, Renoir, Pizarro, Degas. Philip listened with all his ears, and though he felt a little out of it, his heart leaped with exultation. The time flew. When Clutton got up he said:

"I expect you'll find me here this evening if you care to come. You'll find this about the best place for getting dyspepsia at the lowest cost in the Quarter."

XLI

PHILIP walked down the Boulevard du Montparnasse. It was not at all like the Paris he had seen in the spring during his visit to do the accounts of the Hôtel St. Georges—he thought already of that part of his life with a shudder—but reminded him of what he thought a provincial town must be. There was an easy-going air about it, and a sunny spaciousness which invited the mind to day-dreaming. The trimness of the trees, the vivid whiteness of the houses, the breadth, were very agreeable; and he felt himself already thoroughly at home. He sauntered along, staring at the people; there seemed an elegance about the most ordinary, workmen with their broad red sashes and their wide trousers, little soldiers in dingy, charming uniforms. He came presently to the Avenue de l'Observatoire, and he gave a sigh of pleasure at the magnificent, yet so graceful, vista. He came to the gardens of the Luxembourg: children were playing, nurses with long ribbons walked slowly two by two, busy men passed through with satchels under their arms, youths strangely dressed. The scene was formal and dainty; nature was arranged and ordered, but so exquisitely, that nature unordered and unarranged seemed barbaric. Philip was enchanted. It excited him to stand on that spot of which he had read so much; it was classic ground to him; and he felt the awe and the delight which some old don might feel when for the first time he looked on the smiling plain of Sparta.

As he wandered he chanced to see Miss Price sitting by herself on a bench. He hesitated, for he did not at that moment want to see anyone, and her uncouth way seemed out of place amid the happiness he felt around him; but he had divined her sensitiveness to affront, and since she had seen him thought it would be polite to speak to her.

"What are you doing here?" she said, as he came up.

"Enjoying myself. Aren't you?"

"Oh, I come here every day from four to five. I don't think one does any good if one works straight through."

"May I sit down for a minute?" he said.

"If you want to."

"That doesn't sound very cordial," he laughed.

"I'm not much of a one for saying pretty things."

Philip, a little disconcerted, was silent as he lit a cigarette.

"Did Clutton say anything about my work?" she asked suddenly.

"No, I don't think he did," said Philip.

"He's no good, you know. He thinks he's a genius, but he isn't. He's too lazy, for one thing. Genius is an infinite capacity for taking pains. The only thing is to peg away. If one only makes up one's mind badly enough to do a thing one can't help doing it."

She spoke with a passionate strenuousness which was rather striking. She wore a sailor hat of black straw, a white blouse which was not quite clean, and a brown skirt. She had no gloves on, and her hands wanted washing. She was so unattractive that Philip wished he had not begun to talk to her. He could not make out whether she wanted him to stay or go.

"I'll do anything I can for you," she said all at once, without reference to anything that had gone before. "I know how hard it is."

"Thank you very much," said Philip, then in a moment: "Won't you come and have tea with me somewhere?"

She looked at him quickly and flushed. When she reddened her pasty skin acquired a curiously mottled look, like strawberries and cream that had gone bad.

"No, thanks. What d'you think I want tea for? I've only just had lunch."

"I thought it would pass the time," said Philip.

"If you find it long you needn't bother about me, you know. I don't mind being left alone."

At that moment two men passed, in brown velveteens, enormous trousers, and basque caps. They were young, but both wore beards.

"I say, are those art-students?" said Philip. "They might have stepped out of the *Vie de Bohème*."

"They're Americans," said Miss Price scornfully. "Frenchmen haven't worn things like that for thirty years, but the Americans from the Far West buy those clothes and have themselves photographed the day after they arrive in Paris. That's about as near to art as they ever get. But it doesn't matter to them, they've all got money."

Philip liked the daring picturesqueness of the Americans' costume; he thought it showed the romantic spirit. Miss Price asked him the time.

"I must be getting along to the studio," she said. "Are you going to the sketch classes?"

Philip did not know anything about them, and she told him that from five to six every evening a model sat, from whom anyone who liked could go and draw at the cost of fifty centimes. They had a different model every day, and it was very good practice.

"I don't suppose you're good enough yet for that. You'd better wait a bit."

"I don't see why I shouldn't try. I haven't got anything else to do."

They got up and walked to the studio. Philip could not tell from her manner whether Miss Price wished him to walk with her or preferred to walk alone. He remained from sheer embarrassment, not knowing how to leave her; but she would not talk: she answered his questions in an ungracious manner.

A man was standing at the studio door with a large dish into which each person as he went in dropped his half franc. The studio was much fuller than it had been in the morning, and there was not the preponderance of English and Americans; nor were women there in so large a proportion. Philip felt the assemblage was more the sort of thing he had expected. It was very warm, and the air quickly grew fetid. It was an old man who sat this time, with a vast gray beard, and Philip tried to put into practice the little he had learned in the morning; but he made a poor job of it; he realised that he could not draw nearly as well as he thought. He glanced enviously at one or two sketches of men who sat near him, and wondered whether he would ever be able to use the charcoal with that mastery. The hour passed quickly. Not wishing to press himself upon Miss Price he sat down at some distance from her, and at the end, as he passed her on his way out, she asked him brusquely how he had got on.

"Not very well," he smiled.

"If you'd condescended to come and sit near me I could have given you some hints. I suppose you thought yourself too grand."

"No, it wasn't that. I was afraid you'd think me a nuisance."

"When I do that I'll tell you sharp enough."

Philip saw that in her uncouth way she was offering him help.

"Well, tomorrow I'll just force myself upon you."

"I don't mind," she answered.

Philip went out and wondered what he should do with himself till dinner. He was eager to do something characteristic. *Absinthe!* Of course it was indicated, and so, sauntering towards the station, he seated himself outside a café and ordered it. He drank with nausea and satisfaction. He found the taste disgusting, but the moral effect magnificent; he felt every inch an art-student; and

since he drank on an empty stomach his spirits presently grew very high. He watched the crowds, and felt all men were his brothers. He was happy. When he reached Gravier's the table at which Clutton sat was full, but as soon as he saw Philip limping along he called out to him. They made room. The dinner was frugal, a plate of soup, a dish of meat, fruit, cheese, and half a bottle of wine; but Philip paid no attention to what he ate. He took note of the men at the table. Flanagan was there again: he was an American, a short, snub-nosed youth with a jolly face and a laughing mouth. He wore a Norfolk jacket of bold pattern, a blue stock round his neck, and a tweed cap of fantastic shape. At that time impressionism reigned in the Latin Quarter, but its victory over the older schools was still recent; and Carolus-Duran, Bouguereau, and their like were set up against Manet, Monet, and Degas. To appreciate these was still a sign of grace. Whistler was an influence strong with the English and his compatriots, and the discerning collected Japanese prints. The old masters were tested by new standards. The esteem in which Raphael had been for centuries held was a matter of derision to wise young men. They offered to give all his works for Velasquez' head of Philip IV in the National Gallery. Philip found that a discussion on art was raging. Lawson, whom he had met at luncheon, sat opposite to him. He was a thin youth with a freckled face and red hair. He had very bright green eyes. As Philip sat down he fixed them on him and remarked suddenly:

"Raphael was only tolerable when he painted other people's pictures. When he painted Peruginos or Pinturicchios he was charming; when he painted Raphaels he was," with a scornful shrug, "Raphael."

Lawson spoke so aggressively that Philip was taken aback, but he was not obliged to answer because Flanagan broke in impatiently.

"Oh, to hell with art!" he cried. "Let's get ginny."

"You were ginny last night, Flanagan," said Lawson.

"Nothing to what I mean to be tonight," he answered. "Fancy being in Pa-ris and thinking of nothing but art all the time." He spoke with a broad Western accent. "My, it is good to be alive." He gathered himself together and then banged his fist on the table. "To hell with art, I say."

"You not only say it, but you say it with tiresome iteration," said Clutton severely.

There was another American at the table. He was dressed like those fine fellows whom Philip had seen that afternoon in the

Luxembourg. He had a handsome face, thin, ascetic, with dark eyes; he wore his fantastic garb with the dashing air of a buccaneer. He had a vast quantity of dark hair which fell constantly over his eyes, and his most frequent gesture was to throw back his head dramatically to get some long wisp out of the way. He began to talk of the *Olympia* by Manet, which then hung in the Luxembourg.

"I stood in front of it for an hour today, and I tell you it's not a good picture."

Lawson put down his knife and fork. His green eyes flashed fire, he gasped with rage; but he could be seen imposing calm upon himself.

"It's very interesting to hear the mind of the untutored savage," he said. "Will you tell us why it isn't a good picture?"

Before the American could answer someone else broke in vehemently.

"D'you mean to say you can look at the painting of that flesh and say it's not good?"

"I don't say that. I think the right breast is very well painted."

"The right breast be damned," shouted Lawson. "The whole thing's a miracle of painting."

He began to describe in detail the beauties of the picture, but at this table at Gravier's they who spoke at length spoke for their own edification. No one listened to him. The American interrupted angrily.

"You don't mean to say you think the head's good?"

Lawson, white with passion now, began to defend the head; but Clutton, who had been sitting in silence with a look on his face of good-humoured scorn, broke in.

"Give him the head. We don't want the head. It doesn't affect the picture."

"All right, I'll give you the head," cried Lawson. "Take the head and be damned to you."

"What about the black line?" cried the American, triumphantly pushing back a wisp of hair which nearly fell in his soup. "You don't see a black line round objects in nature."

"Oh, God, send down fire from heaven to consume the blasphemer," said Lawson. "What has nature got to do with it? No one knows what's in nature and what isn't! The world sees nature through the eyes of the artist. Why, for centuries it saw horses jumping a fence with all their legs extended, and by Heaven, sir, they were extended. It saw shadows black until Monet discovered they were coloured, and by Heaven, sir, they were black. If we

choose to surround objects with a black line, the world will see the black line, and there will be a black line; and if we paint grass red and cows blue, it'll see them red and blue, and, by Heaven, they will be red and blue."

"To hell with art," murmured Flanagan. "I want to get ginny."

Lawson took no notice of the interruption.

"Now look here, when *Olympia* was shown at the Salon, Zola—amid the jeers of the philistines and the hisses of the *pompiers,* the academicians, and the public, Zola said: 'I look forward to the day when Manet's picture will hang in the Louvre opposite the *Odalisque* of Ingres, and it will not be the *Odalisque* which will gain by comparison.' It'll be there. Every day I see the time grow nearer. In ten years the *Olympia* will be in the Louvre."

"Never," shouted the American, using both hands now with a sudden desperate attempt to get his hair once for all out of the way. "In ten years that picture will be dead. It's only a fashion of the moment. No picture can live that hasn't got something which that picture misses by a million miles."

"And what is that?"

"Great art can't exist without a moral element."

"Oh God!" cried Lawson furiously. "I knew it was that. He wants morality." He joined his hands and held them towards heaven in supplication. "Oh, Christopher Columbus, Christopher Columbus, what did you do when you discovered America?"

"Ruskin says . . ."

But before he could add another word, Clutton rapped with the handle of his knife imperiously on the table.

"Gentlemen," he said in a stern voice, and his huge nose positively wrinkled with passion, "a name has been mentioned which I never thought to hear again in decent society. Freedom of speech is all very well, but we must observe the limits of common propriety. You may talk of Bouguereau if you will: there is a cheerful disgustingness in the sound which excites laughter; but let us not sully our chaste lips with the names of J. Ruskin, G. F. Watts, or E. B. Jones."

"Who was Ruskin anyway?" asked Flanagan.

"He was one of the great Victorians. He was a master of English style."

"Ruskin's style—a thing of shreds and purple patches," said Lawson. "Besides, damn the Great Victorians. Whenever I open a paper and see Death of a Great Victorian, I thank Heaven there's one more of them gone. Their only talent was longevity,

and no artist should be allowed to live after he's forty; by then a man has done his best work, all he does after that is repetition. Don't you think it was the greatest luck in the world for them that Keats, Shelley, Bonnington, and Byron died early? What a genius we should think Swinburne if he had perished on the day the first series of *Poems and Ballads* was published!"

The suggestion pleased, for no one at the table was more than twenty-four, and they threw themselves upon it with gusto. They were unanimous for once. They elaborated. Someone proposed a vast bonfire made out of the works of the Forty Academicians into which the Great Victorians might be hurled on their fortieth birthday. The idea was received with acclamation. Carlyle and Ruskin, Tennyson, Browning, G. F. Watts, E. B. Jones, Dickens, Thackeray, they were hurried into the flames; Mr. Gladstone, John Bright, and Cobden; there was a moment's discussion about George Meredith, but Matthew Arnold and Emerson were given up cheerfully. At last came Walter Pater.

"Not Walter Pater," murmured Philip.

Lawson stared at him for a moment with his green eyes and then nodded.

"You're quite right, Walter Pater is the only justification for Monna Lisa. D'you know Cronshaw? He used to know Pater."

"Who's Cronshaw?" asked Philip.

"Cronshaw's a poet. He lives here. Let's go to the Lilas."

La Closerie des Lilas was a café to which they often went in the evening after dinner, and here Cronshaw was invariably to be found between the hours of nine at night and two in the morning. But Flanagan had had enough of intellectual conversation for one evening, and when Lawson made his suggestion, turned to Philip.

"Oh gee, let's go where there are girls," he said. "Come to the Gaîté Montparnasse, and we'll get ginny."

"I'd rather go and see Cronshaw and keep sober," laughed Philip.

XLII

THERE was a general disturbance. Flanagan and two or three more went on to the music-hall, while Philip walked slowly with Clutton and Lawson to the Closerie des Lilas.

"You must go to the Gaîté Montparnasse," said Lawson to him. "It's one of the loveliest things in Paris. I'm going to paint it one of these days."

Philip, influenced by Hayward, looked upon music-halls with scornful eyes, but he had reached Paris at a time when their artistic possibilities were just discovered. The peculiarities of lighting, the masses of dingy red and tarnished gold, the heaviness of the shadows and the decorative lines, offered a new theme; and half the studios in the Quarter contained sketches made in one or other of the local theatres. Men of letters, following in the painters' wake, conspired suddenly to find artistic value in the turns; and red-nosed comedians were lauded to the skies for their sense of character; fat female singers, who had bawled obscurely for twenty years, were discovered to possess inimitable drollery; there were those who found an æsthetic delight in performing dogs; while others exhausted their vocabulary to extol the distinction of conjurers and trick-cyclists. The crowd too, under another influence, was become an object of sympathetic interest. With Hayward, Philip had disdained humanity in the mass; he adopted the attitude of one who wraps himself in solitariness and watches with disgust the antics of the vulgar; but Clutton and Lawson talked of the multitude with enthusiasm. They described the seething throng that filled the various fairs of Paris, the sea of faces, half seen in the glare of acetylene, half hidden in the darkness, and the blare of trumpets, the hooting of whistles, the hum of voices. What they said was new and strange to Philip. They told him about Cronshaw.

"Have you ever read any of his work?"

"No," said Philip.

"It came out in *The Yellow Book.*"

They looked upon him, as painters often do writers, with contempt because he was a layman, with tolerance because he practised an art, and with awe because he used a medium in which themselves felt ill-at-ease.

"He's an extraordinary fellow. You'll find him a bit disappointing at first, he only comes out at his best when he's drunk."

"And the nuisance is," added Clutton, "that it takes him a devil of a time to get drunk."

When they arrived at the café Lawson told Philip that they would have to go in. There was hardly a bite in the autumn air, but Cronshow had a morbid fear of draughts and even in the warmest weather sat inside.

"He knows everyone worth knowing," Lawson explained. "He knew Pater and Oscar Wilde, and he knows Mallarmé and all those fellows."

The object of their search sat in the most sheltered corner of the café, with his coat on and the collar turned up. He wore his hat pressed well down on his forehead so that he should avoid cold air. He was a big man, stout but not obese, with a round face, a small moustache, and little, rather stupid eyes. His head did not seem quite big enough for his body. It looked like a pea uneasily poised on an egg. He was playing dominoes with a Frenchman, and greeted the newcomers with a quiet smile; he did not speak, but as if to make room for them pushed away the little pile of saucers on the table which indicated the number of drinks he had already consumed. He nodded to Philip when he was introduced to him, and went on with the game. Philip's knowledge of the language was small, but he knew enough to tell that Cronshaw, although he had lived in Paris for several years, spoke French execrably.

At last he leaned back with a smile of triumph.

"*Je vous ai battu,*" he said, with an abominable accent. "*Garçong!*"

He called the waiter and turned to Philip.

"Just out from England? See any cricket?"

Philip was a little confused at the unexpected question.

"Cronshaw knows the averages of every first-class cricketer for the last twenty years," said Lawson, smiling.

The Frenchman left them for friends at another table, and Cronshaw, with the lazy enunciation which was one of his peculiarities, began to discourse on the relative merits of Kent and Lancashire. He told them of the last test match he had seen and described the course of the game wicket by wicket.

"That's the only thing I miss in Paris," he said, as he finished the *bock* which the waiter had brought. "You don't get any cricket."

Philip was disappointed, and Lawson, pardonably anxious to

show off one of the celebrities of the Quarter, grew impatient. Cronshaw was taking his time to wake up that evening, though the saucers at his side indicated that he had at least made an honest attempt to get drunk. Clutton watched the scene with amusement. He fancied there was something of affectation in Cronshaw's minute knowledge of cricket; he liked to tantalise people by talking to them of things that obviously bored them; Clutton threw in a question.

"Have you seen Mallarmé lately?"

Cronshaw looked at him slowly, as if he were turning the inquiry over in his mind, and before he answered rapped on the marble table with one of the saucers.

"Bring my bottle of whiskey," he called out. He turned again to Philip. "I keep my own bottle of whiskey. I can't afford to pay fifty centimes for every thimbleful."

The waiter brought the bottle, and Cronshaw held it up to the light.

"They've been drinking it. Waiter, who's been helping himself to my whiskey?"

"*Mais personne, Monsieur Cronshaw.*"

"I made a mark on it last night, and look at it."

"Monsieur made a mark, but he kept on drinking after that. At that rate Monsieur wastes his time in making marks."

The waiter was a jovial fellow and knew Cronshaw intimately. Cronshaw gazed at him.

"If you give me your word of honour as a nobleman and a gentleman that nobody but I has been drinking my whiskey, I'll accept your statement."

This remark, translated literally into the crudest French, sounded very funny, and the lady at the *comptoir* could not help laughing.

"*Il est impayable,*" she murmured.

Cronshaw, hearing her, turned a sheepish eye upon her; she was stout, matronly, and middle-aged; and solemnly kissed his hand to her. She shrugged her shoulders.

"Fear not, madam," he said heavily. "I have passed the age when I am tempted by forty-five and gratitude."

He poured himself out some whiskey and water, and slowly drank it. He wiped his mouth with the back of his hand.

"He talked very well."

Lawson and Clutton knew that Cronshaw's remark was an answer to the question about Mallarmé. Cronshaw often went to the gatherings on Tuesday evenings when the poet received men of letters and painters, and discoursed with subtle oratory on any

subject that was suggested to him. Cronshaw had evidently been there lately.

"He talked very well, but he talked nonsense. He talked about art as though it were the most important thing in the world."

"If it isn't, what are we here for?" asked Philip.

"What you're here for I don't know. It is no business of mine. But art is a luxury. Men attach importance only to self-preservation and the propagation of their species. It is only when these instincts are satisfied that they consent to occupy themselves with the entertainment which is provided for them by writers, painters, and poets."

Cronshaw stopped for a moment to drink. He had pondered for twenty years the problem whether he loved liquor because it made him talk or whether he loved conversation because it made him thirsty.

Then he said: "I wrote a poem yesterday."

Without being asked he began to recite it, very slowly, marking the rhythm with an extended forefinger. It was possibly a very fine poem, but at that moment a young woman came in. She had scarlet lips, and it was plain that the vivid colour of her cheeks was not due to the vulgarity of nature; she had blackened her eyelashes and eyebrows, and painted both eyelids a bold blue, which was continued to a triangle at the corner of the eyes. It was fantastic and amusing. Her dark hair was done over her ears in the fashion made popular by Mlle. Cléo de Merode. Philip's eyes wandered to her, and Cronshaw, having finished the recitation of his verses, smiled upon him indulgently.

"You were not listening," he said.

"Oh yes, I was."

"I do not blame you, for you have given an apt illustration of the statement I just made. What is art beside love? I respect and applaud your indifference to fine poetry when you can contemplate the meretricious charms of this young person."

She passed by the table at which they were sitting, and he took her arm.

"Come and sit by my side, dear child, and let us play the divine comedy of love."

"*Fichez-moi la paix,*" she said, and pushing him on one side continued her perambulation.

"Art," he continued, with a wave of the hand, "is merely the refuge which the ingenious have invented, when they were supplied with food and women, to escape the tediousness of life."

Cronshaw filled his glass again, and began to talk at length.

He spoke with rotund delivery. He chose his words carefully. He mingled wisdom and nonsense in the most astounding manner, gravely making fun of his hearers at one moment, and at the next playfully giving them sound advice. He talked of art, and literature, and life. He was by turns devout and obscene, merry and lachrymose. He grew remarkably drunk, and then he began to recite poetry, his own and Milton's, his own and Shelley's, his own and Kit Marlowe's.

At last Lawson, exhausted, got up to go home.

"I shall go too," said Philip.

Clutton, the most silent of them all, remained behind listening, with a sardonic smile on his lips, to Cronshaw's maunderings. Lawson accompanied Philip to his hotel and then bade him goodnight. But when Philip got to bed he could not sleep. All these new ideas that had been flung before him carelessly seethed in his brain. He was tremendously excited. He felt in himself great powers. He had never before been so self-confident.

"I know I shall be a great artist," he said to himself. "I feel it in me."

A thrill passed through him as another thought came, but even to himself he would not put it into words:

"By George, I believe I've got genius."

He was in fact very drunk, but as he had not taken more than one glass of beer, it could have been due only to a more dangerous intoxicant than alcohol.

XLIII

On Tuesdays and Fridays masters spent the morning at Amitrano's, criticising the work done. In France the painter earns little unless he paints portraits and is patronised by rich Americans; and men of reputation are glad to increase their incomes by spending two or three hours once a week at one of the numerous studios where art is taught. Tuesday was the day upon which Michel Rollin came to Amitrano's. He was an elderly man, with a white beard and a florid complexion, who had painted a number of decorations for the State, but these were an object of derision to the students he instructed: he was a disciple of Ingres, impervious to the progress of art and angrily impatient with that *tas de farceurs* whose names were Manet, Degas, Monet, and Sisley; but he was an excellent teacher, helpful, polite, and encouraging. Foinet, on the other hand, who visited the studio on Fridays, was a difficult man to get on with. He was a small, shrivelled person, with bad teeth and a bilious air, an untidy gray beard, and savage eyes; his voice was high and his tone sarcastic. He had had pictures bought by the Luxembourg, and at twenty-five looked forward to a great career; but his talent was due to youth rather than to personality, and for twenty years he had done nothing but repeat the landscape which had brought him his early success. When he was reproached with monotony, he answered:

"Corot only painted one thing. Why shouldn't I?"

He was envious of everyone else's success, and had a peculiar, personal loathing of the impressionists; for he looked upon his own failure as due to the mad fashion which had attracted the public, *sale bête,* to their works. The genial disdain of Michel Rollin, who called them impostors, was answered by him with vituperation, of which *crapule* and *canaille* were the least violent items; he amused himself with abuse of their private lives, and with sardonic humour, with blasphemous and obscene detail, attacked the legitimacy of their births and the purity of their conjugal relations: he used an Oriental imagery and an Oriental emphasis to accentuate his ribald scorn. Nor did he conceal his contempt for the students whose work he examined. By them he was hated and feared; the women by his brutal sarcasm he reduced often to tears, which again aroused his ridicule; and he remained

at the studio, notwithstanding the protests of those who suffered too bitterly from his attacks, because there could be no doubt that he was one of the best masters in Paris. Sometimes the old model who kept the school ventured to remonstrate with him, but his expostulations quickly gave way before the violent insolence of the painter to abject apologies.

It was Foinet with whom Philip first came in contact. He was already in the studio when Philip arrived. He went round from easel to easel, with Mrs. Otter, the *massière,* by his side to interpret his remarks for the benefit of those who could not understand French. Fanny Price, sitting next to Philip, was working feverishly. Her face was sallow with nervousness, and every now and then she stopped to wipe her hands on her blouse; for they were hot with anxiety. Suddenly she turned to Philip with an anxious look, which she tried to hide by a sullen frown.

"D'you think it's good?" she asked, nodding at her drawing.

Philip got up and looked at it. He was astounded; he felt she must have no eye at all; the thing was hopelessly out of drawing.

"I wish I could draw half as well myself," he answered.

"You can't expect to, you've only just come. It's a bit too much to expect that you should draw as well as I do. I've been here two years."

Fanny Price puzzled Philip. Her conceit was stupendous. Philip had already discovered that everyone in the studio cordially disliked her; and it was no wonder, for she seemed to go out of her way to wound people.

"I complained to Mrs. Otter about Foinet," she said now. "The last two weeks he hasn't looked at my drawing. He spends about half an hour on Mrs. Otter because she's the *massière.* After all I pay as much as anybody else, and I suppose my money's as good as theirs. I don't see why I shouldn't get as much attention as anybody else."

She took up her charcoal again, but in a moment put it down with a groan.

"I can't do any more now. I'm so frightfully nervous."

She looked at Foinet, who was coming towards them with Mrs. Otter. Mrs. Otter, meek, mediocre, and self-satisfied, wore an air of importance. Foinet sat down at the easel of an untidy little Englishwoman called Ruth Chalice. She had the fine black eyes, languid but passionate, the thin face, ascetic but sensual, the skin like old ivory, which under the influence of Burne-Jones were cultivated at that time by young ladies in Chelsea. Foinet

seemed in a pleasant mood; he did not say much to her, but with quick, determined strokes of her charcoal pointed out her errors. Miss Chalice beamed with pleasure when he rose. He came to Clutton, and by this time Philip was nervous too, but Mrs. Otter had promised to make things easy for him. Foinet stood for a moment in front of Clutton's work, biting his thumb silently, then absent-mindedly spat out upon the canvas the little piece of skin which he had bitten off.

"That's a fine line," he said at last, indicating with his thumb what pleased him. "You're beginning to learn to draw."

Clutton did not answer, but looked at the master with his usual air of sardonic indifference to the world's opinion.

"I'm beginning to think you have at least a trace of talent."

Mrs. Otter, who did not like Clutton, pursed her lips. She did not see anything out of the way in his work. Foinet sat down and went into technical details. Mrs. Otter grew rather tired of standing. Clutton did not say anything, but nodded now and then, and Foinet felt with satisfaction that he grasped what he said and the reasons of it; most of them listened to him, but it was clear they never understood. Then Foinet got up and came to Philip.

"He only arrived two days ago," Mrs. Otter hurried to explain. "He's a beginner. He's never studied before."

"*Ca se voit,*" the master said. "One sees that."

He passed on, and Mrs. Otter murmured to him:

"This is the young lady I told you about."

He looked at her as though she were some repulsive animal, and his voice grew more rasping.

"It appears that you do not think I pay enough attention to you. You have been complaining to the *massière*. Well, show me this work to which you wish me to give attention."

Fanny Price coloured. The blood under her unhealthy skin seemed to be of a strange purple. Without answering she pointed to the drawing on which she had been at work since the beginning of the week. Foinet sat down.

"Well, what do you wish me to say to you? Do you wish me to tell you it is good? It isn't. Do you wish me to tell you it is well drawn? It isn't. Do you wish me to say it has merit? It hasn't. Do you wish me to show you what is wrong with it? It is all wrong. Do you wish me to tell you what to do with it? Tear it up. Are you satisfied now?"

Miss Price became very white. She was furious because he had said all this before Mrs. Otter. Though she had been in France

so long and could understand French well enough, she could hardly speak two words.

"He's got no right to treat me like that. My money's as good as anyone else's. I pay him to teach me. That's not teaching me."

"What does she say? What does she say?" asked Foinet.

Mrs. Otter hesitated to translate, and Miss Price repeated in execrable French.

"*Je vous paye pour m'apprendre.*"

His eyes flashed with rage, he raised his voice and shook his fist.

"*Mais, nom de Dieu,* I can't teach you. I could more easily teach a camel." He turned to Mrs. Otter. "Ask her, does she do this for amusement, or does she expect to earn money by it?"

"I'm going to earn my living as an artist," Miss Price answered.

"Then it is my duty to tell you that you are wasting your time. It would not matter that you have no talent, talent does not run about the streets in these days, but you have not the beginning of an aptitude. How long have you been here? A child of five after two lessons would draw better than you do. I only say one thing to you, give up this hopeless attempt. You're more likely to earn your living as a *bonne à tout faire* than as a painter. Look."

He seized a piece of charcoal, and it broke as he applied it to the paper. He cursed, and with the stump drew great firm lines. He drew rapidly and spoke at the same time, spitting out the words with venom.

"Look, those arms are not the same length. That knee, it's grotesque. I tell you a child of five. You see, she's not standing on her legs. That foot!"

With each word the angry pencil made a mark, and in a moment the drawing upon which Fanny Price had spent so much time and eager trouble was unrecognisable, a confusion of lines and smudges. At last he flung down the charcoal and stood up.

"Take my advice, Mademoiselle, try dressmaking." He looked at his watch. "It's twelve. *À la semaine prochaine, messieurs.*"

Miss Price gathered up her things slowly. Philip waited behind after the others to say to her something consolatory. He could think of nothing but:

"I say, I'm awfully sorry. What a beast that man is!"

She turned on him savagely.

"Is that what you're waiting about for? When I want your sympathy I'll ask for it. Please get out of my way."

She walked past him, out of the studio, and Philip, with a shrug of the shoulders, limped along to Gravier's for luncheon.

"It served her right," said Lawson, when Philip told him what had happened. "Ill-tempered slut."

Lawson was very sensitive to criticism and, in order to avoid it, never went to the studio when Foinet was coming.

"I don't want other people's opinion of my work," he said. "I know myself if it's good or bad."

"You mean you don't want other people's bad opinion of your work," answered Clutton dryly.

In the afternoon Philip thought he would go to the Luxembourg to see the pictures, and walking through the garden he saw Fanny Price sitting in her accustomed seat. He was sore at the rudeness with which she had met his well-meant attempt to say something pleasant, and passed as though he had not caught sight of her. But she got up at once and came towards him.

"Are you trying to cut me?" she said.

"No, of course not. I thought perhaps you didn't want to be spoken to."

"Where are you going?"

"I wanted to have a look at the Manet, I've heard so much about it."

"Would you like me to come with you? I know the Luxembourg rather well. I could show you one or two good things."

He understood that, unable to bring herself to apologise directly, she made this offer as amends.

"It's awfully kind of you. I should like it very much."

"You needn't say yes if you'd rather go alone," she said suspiciously.

"I wouldn't."

They walked towards the gallery. Caillebotte's collection had lately been placed on view, and the student for the first time had the opportunity to examine at his ease the works of the impressionists. Till then it had been possible to see them only at Durand-Ruel's shop in the Rue Lafitte (and the dealer, unlike his fellows in England, who adopt towards the painter an attitude of superiority, was always pleased to show the shabbiest student whatever he wanted to see), or at his private house, to which it was not difficult to get a card of admission on Tuesdays, and where you might see pictures of world-wide reputation. Miss Price led Philip straight up to Manet's *Olympia*. He looked at it in astonished silence.

"Do you like it?" asked Miss Price.

"I don't know," he answered helplessly.

"You can take it from me that it's the best thing in the gallery except perhaps Whistler's portrait of his mother."

She gave him a certain time to contemplate the masterpiece and then took him to a picture representing a railway-station.

"Look, here's a Monet," she said. "It's the Gare St. Lazare."

"But the railway lines aren't parallel," said Philip.

"What does that matter?" she asked, with a haughty air.

Philip felt ashamed of himself. Fanny Price had picked up the glib chatter of the studios and had no difficulty in impressing Philip with the extent of her knowledge. She proceeded to explain the pictures to him, superciliously but not without insight, and showed him what the painters had attempted and what he must look for. She talked with much gesticulation of the thumb, and Philip, to whom all she said was new, listened with profound but bewildered interest. Till now he had worshipped Watts and Burne-Jones. The pretty colour of the first, the affected drawing of the second, had entirely satisfied his æsthetic sensibilities. Their vague idealism, the suspicion of a philosophical idea which underlay the titles they gave their pictures, accorded very well with the functions of art as from his diligent perusal of Ruskin he understood it; but here was something quite different: here was no moral appeal; and the contemplation of these works could help no one to lead a purer and a higher life. He was puzzled.

At last he said: "You know, I'm simply dead. I don't think I can absorb anything more profitably. Let's go and sit down on one of the benches."

"It's better not to take too much art at a time," Miss Price answered.

When they got outside he thanked her warmly for the trouble she had taken.

"Oh, that's all right," she said, a little ungraciously. "I do it because I enjoy it. We'll go to the Louvre tomorrow if you like, and then I'll take you to Durand-Ruel's."

"You're really awfully good to me."

"You don't think me such a beast as the most of them do."

"I don't," he smiled.

"They think they'll drive me away from the studio; but they won't; I shall stay there just exactly as long as it suits me. All that this morning, it was Lucy Otter's doing, I know it was. She always has hated me. She thought after that I'd take myself off. I daresay she'd like me to go. She's afraid I know too much about her."

Miss Price told him a long, involved story, which made out that Mrs. Otter, a humdrum and respectable little person, had scabrous intrigues. Then she talked of Ruth Chalice, the girl whom Foinet had praised that morning.

"She's been with every one of the fellows at the studio. She's nothing better than a street-walker. And she's dirty. She hasn't had a bath for a month, I know it for a fact."

Philip listened uncomfortably. He had heard already that various rumours were in circulation about Miss Chalice; but it was ridiculous to suppose that Mrs. Otter, living with her mother, was anything but rigidly virtuous. The woman walking by his side with her malignant lying positively horrified him.

"I don't care what they say. I shall go on just the same. I know I've got it in me. I feel I'm an artist. I'd sooner kill myself than give it up. Oh, I shan't be the first they've all laughed at in the schools and then he's turned out the only genius of the lot. Art's the only thing I care for, I'm willing to give my whole life to it. It's only a question of sticking to it and pegging away."

She found discreditable motives for everyone who would not take her at her own estimate of herself. She detested Clutton. She told Philip that his friend had no talent really; it was just flashy and superficial; he couldn't compose a figure to save his life. And Lawson:

"Little beast, with his red hair and his freckles. He's so afraid of Foinet that he won't let him see his work. After all, I don't funk it, do I? I don't care what Foinet says to me, I know I'm a real artist."

They reached the street in which she lived, and with a sigh of relief Philip left her.

XLIV

But notwithstanding when Miss Price on the following Sunday offered to take him to the Louvre Philip accepted. She showed him Monna Lisa. He looked at it with a slight feeling of disappointment, but he had read till he knew by heart the jewelled words with which Walter Pater has added beauty to the most famous picture in the world; and these now he repeated to Miss Price.

"That's all literature," she said, a little contemptuously. "You must get away from that."

She showed him the Rembrandts, and she said many appropriate things about them. She stood in front of the *Disciples at Emmaus*.

"When you feel the beauty of that," she said, "you'll know something about painting."

She showed him the *Odalisque* and *La Source* of Ingres. Fanny Price was a peremptory guide, she would not let him look at the things he wished, and attempted to force his admiration for all she admired. She was desperately in earnest with her study of art, and when Philip, passing in the Long Gallery a window that looked out on the Tuileries, gay, sunny, and urbane, like a picture by Raffaëlli, exclaimed:

"I say, how jolly! Do let's stop here a minute."

She said, indifferently: "Yes, it's all right. But we've come here to look at pictures."

The autumn air, blithe and vivacious, elated Philip; and when towards mid-day they stood in the great court-yard of the Louvre, he felt inclined to cry like Flanagan: To Hell with art.

"I say, do let's go to one of those restaurants in the Boul' Mich' and have a snack together, shall we?" he suggested.

Miss Price gave him a suspicious look.

"I've got my lunch waiting for me at home," she answered.

"That doesn't matter. You can eat it tomorrow. Do let me stand you a lunch."

"I don't know why you want to."

"It would give me pleasure," he replied, smiling.

They crossed the river, and at the corner of the Boulevard St. Michel there was a restaurant.

"Let's go in there."

"No, I won't go there, it looks too expensive."

She walked on firmly, and Philip was obliged to follow. A few steps brought them to a smaller restaurant, where a dozen people were already lunching on the pavement under an awning; on the window was announced in large white letters: *Déjeuner 1.25, vin compris.*

"We couldn't have anything cheaper than this, and it looks quite all right."

They sat down at a vacant table and waited for the omelette which was the first article on the bill of fare. Philip gazed with delight upon the passersby. His heart went out to them. He was tired but very happy.

"I say, look at that man in the blouse. Isn't he ripping!"

He glanced at Miss Price, and to his astonishment saw that she was looking down at her plate, regardless of the passing spectacle, and two heavy tears were rolling down her cheeks.

"What on earth's the matter?" he exclaimed.

"If you say anything to me I shall get up and go at once," she answered.

He was entirely puzzled, but fortunately at that moment the omelette came. He divided it in two and they began to eat. Philip did his best to talk of indifferent things, and it seemed as though Miss Price were making an effort on her side to be agreeable; but the luncheon was not altogether a success. Philip was squeamish, and the way in which Miss Price ate took his appetite away. She ate noisily, greedily, a little like a wild beast in a menagerie, and after she had finished each course rubbed the plate with pieces of bread till it was white and shining, as if she did not wish to lose a single drop of gravy. They had Camembert cheese, and it disgusted Philip to see that she ate rind and all of the portion that was given her. She could not have eaten more ravenously if she were starving.

Miss Price was unaccountable, and having parted from her on one day with friendliness he could never tell whether on the next she would not be sulky and uncivil; but he learned a good deal from her: though she could not draw well herself, she knew all that could be taught, and her constant suggestions helped his progress. Mrs. Otter was useful to him too, and sometimes Miss Chalice criticised his work; he learned from the glib loquacity of Lawson and from the example of Clutton. But Fanny Price hated him to take suggestions from anyone but herself, and when he asked her help after someone else had been talking to him she would

refuse with brutal rudeness. The other fellows, Lawson, Clutton, Flanagan, chaffed him about her.

"You be careful, my lad," they said, "she's in love with you."

"Oh, what nonsense," he laughed.

The thought that Miss Price could be in love with anyone was preposterous. It made him shudder when he thought of her uncomeliness, the bedraggled hair and the dirty hands, the brown dress she always wore, stained and ragged at the hem: he supposed she was hard up, they were all hard up, but she might at least be clean; and it was surely possible with a needle and thread to make her skirt tidy.

Philip began to sort his impressions of the people he was thrown in contact with. He was not so ingenuous as in those days which now seemed so long ago at Heidelberg, and, beginning to take a more deliberate interest in humanity, he was inclined to examine and to criticise. He found it difficult to know Clutton any better after seeing him every day for three months than on the first day of their acquaintance. The general impression at the studio was that he was able; it was supposed that he would do great things, and he shared the general opinion; but what exactly he was going to do neither he nor anybody alse quite knew. He had worked at several studios before Amitrano's, at Julian's, the Beaux Arts, and MacPherson's, and was remaining longer at Amitrano's than anywhere because he found himself more left alone. He was not fond of showing his work, and unlike most of the young men who were studying art neither sought nor gave advice. It was said that in the little studio in the Rue Campagne Première, which served him for work-room and bed-room, he had wonderful pictures which would make his reputation if only he could be induced to exhibit them. He could not afford a model but painted still life, and Lawson constantly talked of a plate of apples which he declared was a masterpiece. He was fastidious, and, aiming at something he did not quite fully grasp, was constantly dissatisfied with his work as a whole: perhaps a part would please him, the forearm or the leg and foot of a figure, a glass or a cup in a still-life; and he would cut this out and keep it, destroying the rest of the canvas; so that when people invited themselves to see his work he could truthfully answer that he had not a single picture to show. In Brittany he had come across a painter whom nobody else had heard of, a queer fellow who had been a stockbroker and taken up painting at middle-age, and he was greatly influenced by his work. He was turning his back on the impressionists and working out for himself painfully an individual way not only of

painting but of seeing. Philip felt in him something strangely original.

At Gravier's where they ate, and in the evening at the Versailles or at the Closerie des Lilas Clutton was inclined to taciturnity. He sat quietly, with a sardonic expression on his gaunt face, and spoke only when the opportunity occurred to throw in a witticism. He liked a butt and was most cheerful when someone was there on whom he could exercise his sarcasm. He seldom talked of anything but painting, and then only with the one or two persons whom he thought worth while. Philip wondered whether there was in him really anything: his reticence, the haggard look of him, the pungent humour, seemed to suggest personality, but might be no more than an effective mask which covered nothing.

With Lawson on the other hand Philip soon grew intimate. He had a variety of interests which made him an agreeable companion. He read more than most of the students and though his income was small, loved to buy books. He lent them willingly; and Philip became acquainted with Flaubert and Balzac, with Verlaine, Heredia, and Villiers de l'Isle Adam. They went to plays together and sometimes to the gallery of the Opéra Comique. There was the Odéon quite near them, and Philip soon shared his friend's passion for the tragedians of Louis XIV and the sonorous Alexandrine. In the Rue Taitbout were the Concerts Rouge, where for seventy-five centimes they could hear excellent music and get into the bargain something which it was quite possible to drink: the seats were uncomfortable, the place was crowded, the air thick with caporal horrible to breathe, but in their young enthusiasm they were indifferent. Sometimes they went to the Bal Bullier. On these occasions Flanagan accompanied them. His excitability and his roisterous enthusiasm made them laugh. He was an excellent dancer, and before they had been ten minutes in the room he was prancing round with some little shop-girl whose acquaintance he had just made.

The desire of all of them was to have a mistress. It was part of the paraphernalia of the art-student in Paris. It gave consideration in the eyes of one's fellows. It was something to boast about. But the difficulty was that they had scarcely enough money to keep themselves, and though they argued that Frenchwomen were so clever it cost no more to keep two than one, they found it difficult to meet young women who were willing to take that view of the circumstances. They had to content themselves for the most part with envying and abusing the ladies who received protection from painters of more settled respectability than their

own. It was extraordinary how difficult these things were in Paris. Lawson would become acquainted with some young thing and make an appointment; for twenty-four hours he would be all in a flutter and describe the charmer at length to everyone he met; but she never by any chance turned up at the time fixed. He would come to Gravier's very late, ill-tempered, and exclaim:

"Confound it, another rabbit! I don't know why it is they don't like me. I suppose it's because I don't speak French well, or my red hair. It's too sickening to have spent over a year in Paris without getting hold of anyone."

"You don't go the right way to work," said Flanagan.

He had a long and enviable list of triumphs to narrate, and though they took leave not to believe all he said, evidence forced them to acknowledge that he did not altogether lie. But he sought no permanent arrangement. He only had two years in Paris: he had persuaded his people to let him come and study art instead of going to college; but at the end of that period he was to return to Seattle and go into his father's business. He had made up his mind to get as much fun as possible into the time, and demanded variety rather than duration in his love affairs.

"I don't know how you get hold of them," said Lawson furiously.

"There's no difficulty about that, sonny," answered Flanagan. "You just go right in. The difficulty is to get rid of them. That's where you want tact."

Philip was too much occupied with his work, the books he was reading, the plays he saw, the conversation he listened to, to trouble himself with the desire for female society. He thought there would be plenty of time for that when he could speak French more glibly.

It was more than a year now since he had seen Miss Wilkinson, and during his first weeks in Paris he had been too busy to answer a letter she had written to him just before he left Blackstable. When another came, knowing it would be full of reproaches and not being just then in the mood for them, he put it aside, intending to open it later; but he forgot and did not run across it till a month afterwards, when he was turning out a drawer to find some socks that had no holes in them. He looked at the unopened letter with dismay. He was afraid that Miss Wilkinson had suffered a good deal, and it made him feel a brute; but she had probably got over the suffering by now, at all events the worst of it. It suggested itself to him that women were often very emphatic in their expressions. These did not mean so much as when men

used them. He had quite made up his mind that nothing would induce him ever to see her again. He had not written for so long that it seemed hardly worth while to write now. He made up his mind not to read the letter.

"I daresay she won't write again," he said to himself. "She can't help seeing the thing's over. After all, she was old enough to be my mother; she ought to have known better."

For an hour or two he felt a little uncomfortable. His attitude was obviously the right one, but he could not help a feeling of dissatisfaction with the whole business. Miss Wilkinson, however, did not write again; nor did she, as he absurdly feared, suddenly appear in Paris to make him ridiculous before his friends. In a little while he clean forgot her.

Meanwhile he definitely forsook his old gods. The amazement with which at first he had looked upon the works of the impressionists, changed to admiration; and presently he found himself talking as emphatically as the rest on the merits of Manet, Monet, and Degas. He bought a photograph of a drawing by Ingres of the *Odalisque* and a photograph of the *Olympia*. They were pinned side by side over his washing-stand so that he could contemplate their beauty while he shaved. He knew now quite positively that there had been no painting of landscape before Monet; and he felt a real thrill when he stood in front of Rembrandt's *Disciples at Emmaus* or Velasquez' *Lady with the Flea-bitten Nose*. That was not her real name, but by that she was distinguished at Gravier's to emphasise the picture's beauty notwithstanding the somewhat revolting peculiarity of the sitter's appearance. With Ruskin, Burne-Jones, and Watts, he had put aside his bowler hat and the neat blue tie with white spots which he had worn on coming to Paris; and now disported himself in a soft, broad-brimmed hat, a flowing black cravat, and a cape of romantic cut. He walked along the Boulevard du Montparnasse as though he had known it all his life, and by virtuous perseverance he had learnt to drink absinthe without distaste. He was letting his hair grow, and it was only because Nature is unkind and has no regard for the immortal longings of youth that he did not attempt a beard.

XLV

Philip soon realised that the spirit which informed his friends was Cronshaw's. It was from him that Lawson got his paradoxes; and even Clutton, who strained after individuality, expressed himself in the terms he had insensibly acquired from the older man. It was his ideas that they bandied about at table, and on his authority they formed their judgments. They made up for the respect with which unconsciously they treated him by laughing at his foibles and lamenting his vices.

"Of course, poor old Cronshaw will never do any good," they said. "He's quite hopeless."

They prided themselves on being alone in appreciating his genius; and though, with the contempt of youth for the follies of middle-age, they patronised him among themselves, they did not fail to look upon it as a feather in their caps if he had chosen a time when only one was there to be particularly wonderful. Cronshaw never came to Gravier's. For the last four years he had lived in squalid conditions with a woman whom only Lawson had once seen, in a tiny apartment on the sixth floor of one of the most dilapidated houses on the Quai des Grands Augustins: Lawson described with gusto the filth, the untidiness, the litter.

"And the stink nearly blew your head off."

"Not at dinner, Lawson," expostulated one of the others.

But he would not deny himself the pleasure of giving picturesque details of the odours which met his nostril. With a fierce delight in his own realism he described the woman who had opened the door for him. She was dark, small, and fat, quite young, with black hair that seemed always on the point of coming down. She wore a slatternly blouse and no corsets. With her red cheeks, large sensual mouth, and shining, lewd eyes, she reminded you of the *Bohémienne* in the Louvre by Franz Hals. She had a flaunting vulgarity which amused and yet horrified. A scrubby, unwashed baby was playing on the floor. It was known that the slut deceived Cronshaw with the most worthless ragamuffins of the Quarter, and it was a mystery to the ingenuous youths who absorbed his wisdom over a café table that Cronshaw with his keen intellect and his passion for beauty could ally himself to such a creature. But he seemed to revel in the coarseness of her

language and would often report some phrase which reeked of the gutter. He referred to her ironically as *la fille de mon concierge.* Cronshaw was very poor. He earned a bare subsistence by writing on the exhibitions of pictures for one or two English papers, and he did a certain amount of translating. He had been on the staff of an English paper in Paris, but had been dismissed for drunkenness; he still however did odd jobs for it, describing sales at the Hôtel Drouot or the revues at music-halls. The life of Paris had got into his bones, and he would not change it, notwithstanding its squalor, drudgery, and hardship, for any other in the world. He remained there all through the year, even in summer when everyone he knew was away, and felt himself only at ease within a mile of the Boulevard St. Michel. But the curious thing was that he had never learnt to speak French passably, and he kept in his shabby clothes bought at *La Belle Jardinière* an ineradicably English appearance.

He was a man who would have made a success of life a century and a half ago when conversation was a passpart to good company and inebriety no bar.

"I ought to have lived in the eighteen hundreds," he said himself. "What I want is a patron. I should have published my poems by subscription and dedicated them to a nobleman. I long to compose rhymed couplets upon the poodle of a countess. My soul yearns for the love of chamber-maids and the conversation of bishops."

He quoted the romantic Rolla,

"Je suis venu trop tard dans un monde trop vieux."

He liked new faces, and he took a fancy to Philip, who seemed to achieve the difficult feat of talking just enough to suggest conversation and not too much to prevent monologue. Philip was captivated. He did not realise that little that Cronshaw said was new. His personality in conversation had a curious power. He had a beautiful and a sonorous voice, and a manner of putting things which was irresistible to youth. All he said seemed to excite thought, and often on the way home Lawson and Philip would walk to and from one another's hotels, discussing some point which a chance word of Cranshaw had suggested. It was disconcerting to Philip, who had a youthful eagerness for results, that Cronshaw's poetry hardly came up to expectation. It had never been published in a volume, but most of it had appeared in periodicals; and after a good deal of persuasion Cronshaw brought down a bundle of pages torn out of *The Yellow Book, The Saturday Review,* and other journals, on each of which was a poem. Philip

was taken aback to find that most of them reminded him either of Henley or of Swinburne. It needed the splendour of Cronshaw's delivery to make them personal. He expressed his disappointment to Lawson, who carelessly repeated his words; and next time Philip went to the Closerie des Lilas the poet turned to him with his sleek smile:

"I hear you don't think much of my verses."

Philip was embarrassed.

"I don't know about that," he answered. "I enjoyed reading them very much."

"Do not attempt to spare my feelings," returned Cronshaw, with a wave of his fat hand. "I do not attach any exaggerated importance to my poetical works. Life is there to be lived rather than to be written about. My aim is to search out the manifold experience that it offers, wringing from each moment what of emotion it presents. I look upon my writing as a graceful accomplishment which does not absorb but rather adds pleasure to existence. And as for posterity—damn posterity."

Philip smiled, for it leaped to one's eyes that the artist in life had produced no more than a wretched daub. Cronshaw looked at him meditatively and filled his glass. He sent the waiter for a packet of cigarettes.

"You are amused because I talk in this fashion and you know that I am poor and live in an attic with a vulgar trollop who deceives me with hair-dressers and *garçons de café;* I translate wretched books for the British public, and write articles upon contemptible pictures which deserve not even to be abused. But pray tell me what is the meaning of life?"

"I say, that's rather a difficult question. Won't you give the answer yourself?"

"No, because it's worthless unless you yourself discover it. But what do you suppose you are in the world for?"

Philip had never asked himself, and he thought for a moment before replying.

"Oh, I don't know: I suppose to do one's duty, and make the best possible use of one's faculties, and avoid hurting other people."

"In short, to do unto others as you would they should do unto you?"

"I suppose so."

"Christianity."

"No, it isn't," said Philip indignantly. "It has nothing to do with Christianity. It's just abstract morality."

"But there's no such thing as abstract morality."

"In that case, supposing under the influence of liquor you left your purse behind when you leave here and I picked it up, why do you imagine that I should return it to you? It's not the fear of the police."

"It's the dread of hell if you sin and the hope of Heaven if you are virtuous."

"But I believe in neither."

"That may be. Neither did Kant when he devised the Categorical Imperative. You have thrown aside a creed, but you have preserved the ethic which was based upon it. To all intents you are a Christian still, and if there is a God in Heaven you will undoubtedly receive your reward. The Almighty can hardly be such a fool as the churches make out. If you keep His laws I don't think He can care a packet of pins whether you believe in Him or not."

"But if I left my purse behind you would certainly return it to me," said Philip.

"Not from motives of abstract morality, but only from fear of the police."

"It's a thousand to one that the police would never find out."

"My ancestors have lived in a civilised state so long that the fear of the police has eaten into my bones. The daughter of my *concierge* would not hesitate for a moment. You answer that she belongs to the criminal classes; not at all, she is merely devoid of vulgar prejudice."

"But then that does away with honour and virtue and goodness and decency and everything," said Philip.

"Have you ever committed a sin?"

"I don't know, I suppose so," answered Philip.

"You speak with the lips of a dissenting minister. I have never committed a sin."

Cronshaw in his shabby great-coat, with the collar turned up, and his hat well down on his head, with his red fat face and his little gleaming eyes, looked extraordinarily comic; but Philip was too much in earnest to laugh.

"Have you never done anything you regret?"

"How can I regret when what I did was inevitable?" asked Cronshaw in return.

"But that's fatalism."

"The illusion which man has that his will is free is so deeply rooted that I am ready to accept it. I act as though I were a free agent. But when an action is performed it is clear that all

the forces of the universe from all eternity conspired to cause it, and nothing I could do could have prevented it. It was inevitable. If it was good I can claim no merit; if it was bad I can accept no censure."

"My brain reels," said Philip.

"Have some whiskey," returned Cronshaw, passing over the bottle. "There's nothing like it for clearing the head. You must expect to be thick-witted if you insist upon drinking beer."

Philip shook his head, and Cronshaw proceeded:

"You're not a bad fellow, but you won't drink. Sobriety disturbs conversation. But when I speak of good and bad . . ." Philip saw he was taking up the thread of his discourse, "I speak conventionally. I attach no meaning to those words. I refuse to make a hierarchy of human actions and ascribe worthiness to some and ill-repute to others. The terms vice and virtue have no signification for me. I do not confer praise or blame: I accept. I am the measure of all things. I am the centre of the world."

"But there are one or two other people in the world," objected Philip.

"I speak only for myself. I know them only as they limit my activities. Round each of them too the world turns, and each one for himself is the centre of the universe. My right over them extends only as far as my power. What I can do is the only limit of what I may do. Because we are gregarious we live in society, and society holds together by means of force, force of arms (that is the policeman) and force of public opinion (that is Mrs. Grundy). You have society on one hand and the individual on the other: each is an organism striving for self-preservation. It is might against might. I stand alone, bound to accept society and not unwilling, since in return for the taxes I pay it protects me, a weakling, against the tyranny of another stronger than I am; but I submit to its laws because I must; I do not acknowledge their justice: I do not know justice, I only know power. And when I have paid for the policeman who protects me and, if I live in a country where conscription is in force, served in the army which guards my house and land from the invader, I am quits with society: for the rest I counter its might with my wiliness. It makes laws for its self-preservation, and if I break them it imprisons or kills me: it has the might to do so and therefore the right. If I break the laws I will accept the vengeance of the state, but I will not regard it as punishment nor shall I feel myself convicted of wrong-doing. Society tempts me to its service by honours and riches and the good opinion of my fellows; but I am indifferent to

their good opinion, I despise honours and I can do very well without riches."

"But if everyone thought like you things would go to pieces at once."

"I have nothing to do with others, I am only concerned with myself. I take advantage of the fact that the majority of mankind are led by certain rewards to do things which directly or indirectly tend to my convenience."

"It seems to me an awfully selfish way of looking at things," said Philip.

"But are you under the impression that men ever do anything except for selfish reasons?"

"Yes."

"It is impossible that they should. You will find as you grow older that the first thing needful to make the world a tolerable place to live in is to recognise the inevitable selfishness of humanity. You demand unselfishness from others, which is a preposterous claim that they should sacrifice their desires to yours. Why should they? When you are reconciled to the fact that each is for himself in the world you will ask less from your fellows. They will not disappoint you, and you will look upon them more charitably. Men seek but one thing in life—their pleasure."

"No, no, no!" cried Philip.

Cronshaw chuckled.

"You rear like a frightened colt, because I use a word to which your Christianity ascribes a deprecatory meaning. You have a hierarchy of values; pleasure is at the bottom of the ladder, and you speak with a little thrill of self-satisfaction of duty, charity, and truthfulness. You think pleasure is only of the senses; the wretched slaves who manufactured your morality despised a satisfaction which they had small means of enjoying. You would not be so frightened if I had spoken of happiness instead of pleasure: it sounds less shocking, and your mind wanders from the sty of Epicurus to his garden. But I will speak of pleasure, for I see that men aim at that, and I do not know that they aim at happiness. It is pleasure that lurks in the practice of every one of your virtues. Man performs actions because they are good for him, and when they are good for other people as well they are thought virtuous: if he finds pleasure in giving alms he is charitable; if he finds pleasure in helping others he is benevolent; if he finds pleasure in working for society he is public-spirited; but it is for your private pleasure that you give twopence to a beggar as much as it is for my private pleasure

that I drink another whiskey and soda. I, less of a humbug than you, neither applaud myself for my pleasure nor demand your admiration."

"But have you never known people do things they didn't want to instead of things they did?"

"No. You put your question foolishly. What you mean is that people accept an immediate pain rather than an immediate pleasure. The objection is as foolish as your manner of putting it. It is clear that men accept an immediate pain rather than an immediate pleasure, but only because they expect a greater pleasure in the future. Often the pleasure is illusory, but their error in calculation is no refutation of the rule. You are puzzled because you cannot get over the idea that pleasures are only of the senses; but, child, a man who dies for his country dies because he likes it as surely as a man eats pickled cabbage because he likes it. It is a law of creation. If it were possible for men to prefer pain to pleasure the human race would have long since become extinct."

"But if all that is true," cried Philip, "what is the use of anything? If you take away duty and goodness and beauty why are we brought into the world?"

"Here comes the gorgeous East to suggest an answer," smiled Cronshaw.

He pointed to two persons who at that moment opened the door of the café, and, with a blast of cold air, entered. They were Levantines, itinerant vendors of cheap rugs, and each bore on his arm a bundle. It was Sunday evening, and the café was very full. They passed among the tables, and in that atmosphere heavy and discoloured with tobacco smoke, rank with humanity, they seemed to bring an air of mystery. They were clad in European, shabby clothes, their thin great-coats were threadbare, but each wore a tarbouch. Their faces were gray with cold. One was of middle age, with a black beard, but the other was a youth of eighteen, with a face deeply scarred by small-pox and with one eye only. They passed by Cronshaw and Philip.

"Allah is great, and Mahomet is his prophet," said Cronshaw impressively.

The elder advanced with a cringing smile, like a mongrel used to blows. With a sidelong glance at the door and a quick surreptitious movement he showed a pornographic picture.

"Are you Masr-ed-Deen, the merchant of Alexandria, or is it from far Bagdad that you bring your goods, O, my uncle; and yonder one-eyed youth, do I see in him one of the three kings of whom Scheherazade told stories to her lord?"

The pedlar's smile grew more ingratiating, though he understood no word of what Cronshaw said, and like a conjurer he produced a sandal-wood box.

"Nay, show us the priceless web of Eastern looms," quoth Cronshaw. "For I would point a moral and adorn a tale."

The Levantine unfolded a table-cloth, red and yellow, vulgar, hideous, and grotesque.

"Thirty-five francs," he said.

"O, my uncle, this cloth knew not the weavers of Samarkand, and those colours were never made in the vats of Bokhara."

"Twenty-five francs," smiled the pedlar obsequiously.

"Ultima Thule was the place of its manufacture, even Birmingham the place of my birth."

"Fifteen francs," cringed the bearded man.

"Get thee gone, fellow," said Cronshaw. "May wild asses defile the grave of thy maternal grandmother."

Imperturbably, but smiling no more, the Levantine passed with his wares to another table. Cronshaw turned to Philip.

"Have you ever been to the Cluny, the museum? There you will see Persian carpets of the most exquisite hue and of a pattern the beautiful intricacy of which delights and amazes the eye. In them you will see the mystery and the sensual beauty of the East, the roses of Hafiz and the wine-cup of Omar; but presently you will see more. You were asking just now what was the meaning of life. Go and look at those Persian carpets, and one of these days the answer will come to you."

"You are cryptic," said Philip.

"I am drunk," answered Cronshaw.

XLVI

Philip did not find living in Paris as cheap as he had been led to believe and by February had spent most of the money with which he started. He was too proud to appeal to his guardian, nor did he wish Aunt Louisa to know that his circumstances were straitened, since he was certain she would make an effort to send him something from her own pocket, and he knew how little she could afford to. In three months he would attain his majority and come into possession of his small fortune. He tided over the interval by selling the few trinkets which he had inherited from his father.

At about this time Lawson suggested that they should take a small studio which was vacant in one of the streets that led out of the Boulevard Raspail. It was very cheap. It had a room attached, which they could use as a bed-room; and since Philip was at the school every morning Lawson could have the undisturbed use of the studio then; Lawson, after wandering from school to school, had come to the conclusion that he could work best alone, and proposed to get a model in three or four days a week. At first Philip hesitated on account of the expense, but they reckoned it out; and it seemed (they were so anxious to have a studio of their own that they calculated pragmatically) that the cost would not be much greater than that of living in a hotel. Though the rent and the cleaning by the *concierge* would come to a little more, they would save on the *petit déjeuner,* which they could make themselves. A year or two earlier Philip would have refused to share a room with anyone, since he was so sensitive about his deformed foot, but his morbid way of looking at it was growing less marked: in Paris it did not seem to matter so much, and, though he never by any chance forgot it himself, he ceased to feel that other people were constantly noticing it.

They moved in, bought a couple of beds, a washing-stand, a few chairs, and felt for the first time the thrill of possession. They were so excited that the first night they went to bed in what they could call a home they lay awake talking till three in the morning; and next day found lighting the fire and making their own coffee, which they had in pyjamas, such a jolly business that Philip did not get to Amitrano's till nearly eleven. He was in excellent spirits. He nodded to Fanny Price.

"How are you getting on?" he asked cheerily.

"What does that matter to you?" she asked in reply.

Philip could not help laughing.

"Don't jump down my throat. I was only trying to make myself polite."

"I don't want your politeness."

"D'you think it's worth while quarrelling with me too?" asked Philip mildly. "There are so few people you're on speaking terms with, as it is."

"That's my business, isn't it?"

"Quite."

He began to work, vaguely wondering why Fanny Price made herself so disagreeable. He had come to the conclusion that he thoroughly disliked her. Everyone did. People were only civil to her at all from fear of the malice of her tongue; for to their faces and behind their backs she said abominable things. But Philip was feeling so happy that he did not want even Miss Price to bear ill-feeling towards him. He used the artifice which had often before succeeded in banishing her ill-humour.

"I say, I wish you'd come and look at my drawing. I've got in an awful mess."

"Thank you very much, but I've got something better to do with my time."

Philip stared at her in surprise, for the one thing she could be counted upon to do with alacrity was to give advice. She went on quickly in a low voice, savage with fury.

"Now that Lawson's gone you think you'll put up with me. Thank you very much. Go and find somebody else to help you. I don't want anybody else's leavings."

Lawson had the pedagogic instinct; whenever he found anything out he was eager to impart it; and because he taught with delight he taught with profit. Philip, without thinking anything about it, had got into the habit of sitting by his side; it never occurred to him that Fanny Price was consumed with jealousy, and watched his acceptance of someone else's tuition with ever-increasing anger.

"You were very glad to put up with me when you knew nobody here," she said bitterly, "and as soon as you made friends with other people you threw me aside, like an old glove"—she repeated the stale metaphor with satisfaction—"like an old glove. All right, I don't care, but I'm not going to be made a fool of another time."

There was a suspicion of truth in what she said, and it

made Philip angry enough to answer what first came into his head.

"Hang it all, I only asked your advice because I saw it pleased you."

She gave a gasp and threw him a sudden look of anguish. Then two tears rolled down her cheeks. She looked frowsy and grotesque. Philip, not knowing what on earth this new attitude implied, went back to his work. He was uneasy and conscience-stricken; but he would not go to her and say he was sorry if he had caused her pain, because he was afraid she would take the opportunity to snub him. For two or three weeks she did not speak to him, and, after Philip had got over the discomfort of being cut by her, he was somewhat relieved to be free from so difficult a friendship. He had been a little disconcerted by the air of proprietorship she assumed over him. She was an extraordinary woman. She came every day to the studio at eight o'clock, and was ready to start working when the model was in position; she worked steadily, talking to no one, struggling hour after hour with difficulties she could not overcome, and remained till the clock struck twelve. Her work was hopeless. There was not in it the smallest approach even to the mediocre achievement at which most of the young persons were able after some months to arrive. She wore every day the same ugly brown dress, with the mud of the last wet day still caked on the hem and with the raggedness, which Philip had noticed the first time he saw her, still unmended.

But one day she came up to him, and with a scarlet face asked whether she might speak to him afterwards.

"Of course, as much as you like," smiled Philip. "I'll wait behind at twelve."

He went to her when the day's work was over.

"Will you walk a little bit with me?" she said, looking away from him with embarrassment.

"Certainly."

They walked for two or three minutes in silence.

"D'you remember what you said to me the other day?" she asked then on a sudden.

"Oh, I say, don't let's quarrel," said Philip. "It really isn't worth while."

She gave a quick, painful inspiration.

"I don't want to quarrel with you. You're the only friend I had in Paris. I thought you rather liked me. I felt there was something between us. I was drawn towards you—you know what I mean, your club-foot."

Philip reddened and instinctively tried to walk without a limp. He did not like anyone to mention the deformity. He knew what Fanny Price meant. She was ugly and uncouth, and because he was deformed there was between them a certain sympathy. He was very angry with her, but he forced himself not to speak.

"You said you only asked my advice to please me. Don't you think my work's any good?"

"I've only seen your drawing at Amitrano's. It's awfully hard to judge from that."

"I was wondering if you'd come and look at my other work. I've never asked anyone else to look at it. I should like to show it to you."

"It's awfully kind of you. I'd like to see it very much."

"I live quite near here," she said apologetically. "It'll only take you ten minutes."

"Oh, that's all right," he said.

They were walking along the boulevard, and she turned down a side street, then led him into another, poorer still, with cheap shops on the ground floor, and at last stopped. They climbed flight after flight of stairs. She unlocked a door, and they went into a tiny attic with a sloping roof and a small window. This was closed and the room had a musty smell. Though it was very cold there was no fire and no sign that there had been one. The bed was unmade. A chair, a chest of drawers which served also as a wash-stand, and a cheap easel, were all the furniture. The place would have been squalid enough in any case, but the litter, the untidiness, made the impression revolting. On the chimney-piece, scattered over with paints and brushes, were a cup, a dirty plate, and a tea-pot.

"If you'll stand over there I'll put them on the chair so that you can see them better."

She showed him twenty small canvases, about eighteen by twelve. She placed them on the chair, one after the other, watching his face; he nodded as he looked at each one.

"You do like them, don't you?" she said anxiously, after a bit.

"I just want to look at them all first," he answered. "I'll talk afterwards."

He was collecting himself. He was panic-stricken. He did not know what to say. It was not only that they were ill-drawn, or that the colour was put on amateurishly by someone who had no eye for it; but there was no attempt at getting the values, and the perspective was grotesque. It looked like the work of a child of five, but a child would have had some naïveté and might at

least have made an attempt to put down what he saw; but here was the work of a vulgar mind chock full of recollections of vulgar pictures. Philip remembered that she had talked enthusiastically about Monet and the Impressionists, but here were only the worst traditions of the Royal Academy.

"There," she said at last, "that's the lot."

Philip was no more truthful than anybody else, but he had a great difficulty in telling a thundering, deliberate lie, and he blushed furiously when he answered:

"I think they're most awfully good."

A faint colour came into her unhealthy cheeks, and she smiled a little.

"You needn't say so if you don't think so, you know. I want the truth."

"But I do think so."

"Haven't you got any criticism to offer? There must be some you don't like as well as others."

Philip looked round helplessly. He saw a landscape, the typical picturesque 'bit' of the amateur, an old bridge, a creeper-clad cottage, and a leafy bank.

"Of course I don't pretend to know anything about it," he said. "But I wasn't quite sure about the values of that."

She flushed darkly and taking up the picture quickly turned its back to him.

"I don't know why you should have chosen that one to sneer at. It's the best thing I've ever done. I'm sure my values are all right. That's a thing you can't teach anyone, you either understand values or you don't."

"I think they're all most awfully good," repeated Philip.

She looked at them with an air of self-satisfaction.

"I don't think they're anything to be ashamed of."

Philip looked at his watch.

"I say, it's getting late. Won't you let me give you a little lunch?"

"I've got my lunch waiting for me here."

Philip saw no sign of it, but supposed perhaps the *concierge* would bring it up when he was gone. He was in a hurry to get away. The mustiness of the room made his head ache.

XLVII

In March there was all the excitement of sending in to the Salon. Clutton, characteristically, had nothing ready, and he was very scornful of the two heads that Lawson sent; they were obviously the work of a student, straightforward portraits of models, but they had a certain force; Clutton, aiming at perfection, had no patience with efforts which betrayed hesitancy, and with a shrug of the shoulders told Lawson it was an impertinence to exhibit stuff which should never have been allowed out of his studio; he was not less contemptuous when the two heads were accepted. Flanagan tried his luck too, but his picture was refused. Mrs. Otter sent a blameless *Portrait de ma Mère,* accomplished and second-rate; and was hung in a very good place.

Hayward, whom Philip had not seen since he left Heidelberg, arrived in Paris to spend a few days in time to come to the party which Lawson and Philip were giving in their studio to celebrate the hanging of Lawson's pictures. Philip had been eager to see Hayward again, but when at last they met, he experienced some disappointment. Hayward had altered a little in appearance: his fine hair was thinner, and with the rapid wilting of the very fair, he was becoming wizened and colourless; his blue eyes were paler than they had been, and there was a muzziness about his features. On the other hand, in mind he did not seem to have changed at all, and the culture which had impressed Philip at eighteen aroused somewhat the contempt of Philip at twenty-one. He had altered a good deal himself, and regarding with scorn all his old opinions of art, life, and letters, had no patience with anyone who still held them. He was scarcely conscious of the fact that he wanted to show off before Hayward, but when he took him round the galleries he poured out to him all the revolutionary opinions which himself had so recently adopted. He took him to Manet's *Olympia* and said dramatically:

"I would give all the old masters except Velasquez, Rembrandt, and Vermeer for that one picture."

"Who was Vermeer?" asked Hayward.

"Oh, my dear fellow, don't you know Vermeer? You're not civilised. You musn't live a moment longer without making his acquaintance. He's the one old master who painted like a modern."

He dragged Hayward out of the Luxembourg and hurried him off to the Louvre.

"But aren't there any more pictures here?" asked Hayward, with the tourist's passion for thoroughness.

"Nothing of the least consequence. You can come and look at them by yourself with your Baedeker."

When they arrived at the Louvre Philip led his friend down the Long Gallery.

"I should like to see *The Gioconda,*" said Hayward.

"Oh, my dear fellow, it's only literature," answered Philip.

At last, in a small room, Philip stopped before *The Lacemaker* of Vermeer van Delft.

"There, that's the best picture in the Louvre. It's exactly like a Manet."

With an expressive, eloquent thumb Philip expatiated on the charming work. He used the jargon of the studios with overpowering effect.

"I don't know that I see anything so wonderful as all that in it," said Hayward.

"Of course it's a painter's picture," said Philip. "I can quite believe the layman would see nothing much in it."

"The what?" said Hayward.

"The layman."

Like most people who cultivate an interest in the arts, Hayward was extremely anxious to be right. He was dogmatic with those who did not venture to assert themselves, but with the self-assertive he was very modest. He was impressed by Philip's assurance, and accepted meekly Philip's implied suggestion that the painter's arrogant claim to be the sole possible judge of painting has anything but its impertinence to recommend it.

A day or two later Philip and Lawson gave their party. Cronshaw, making an exception in their favour, agreed to eat their food; and Miss Chalice offered to come and cook for them. She took no interest in her own sex and declined the suggestion that other girls should be asked for her sake. Clutton, Flanagan, Potter, and two others made up the party. Furniture was scarce, so the model stand was used as a table, and the guests were to sit on portmanteaux if they liked, and if they didn't on the floor. The feast consisted of a *pot-au-feu,* which Miss Chalice had made, of a leg of mutton roasted round the corner and brought round hot and savoury (Miss Chalice had cooked the potatoes, and the studio was redolent of the carrots she had fried; fried carrots were her speciality); and this was to be

followed by *poires flambées,* pears with burning brandy, which Cronshaw had volunteered to make. The meal was to finish with an enormous *fromage de Brie,* which stood near the window and added fragrant odours to all the others which filled the studio. Cronshaw sat in the place of honour on a Gladstone bag, with his legs curled under him like a Turkish bashaw, beaming good-naturedly on the young people who surrounded him. From force of habit, though the small studio with the stove lit was very hot, he kept on his great-coat, with the collar turned up, and his bowler hat: he looked with satisfaction on the four large *fiaschi* of Chianti which stood in front of him in a row, two on each side of a bottle of whiskey; he said it reminded him of a slim fair Circassian guarded by four corpulent eunuchs. Hayward in order to put the rest of them at their ease had clothed himself in a tweed suit and a Trinity Hall tie. He looked grotesquely British. The others were elaborately polite to him, and during the soup they talked of the weather and the political situation. There was a pause while they waited for the leg of mutton, and Miss Chalice lit a cigarette.

"Rampunzel, Rampunzel, let down your hair," she said suddenly.

With an elegant gesture she untied a ribbon so that her tresses fell over her shoulders. She shook her head.

"I always feel more comfortable with my hair down."

With her large brown eyes, thin, ascetic face, her pale skin, and broad forehead, she might have stepped out of a picture by Burne-Jones. She had long, beautiful hands, with fingers deeply stained by nicotine. She wore sweeping draperies, mauve and green. There was about her the romantic air of High Street, Kensington. She was wantonly æsthetic; but she was an excellent creature, kind and good-natured; and her affectations were but skin-deep. There was a knock at the door, and they all gave a shout of exultation. Miss Chalice rose and opened. She took the leg of mutton and held it high above her, as though it were the head of John the Baptist on a platter; and, the cigarette still in her mouth, advanced with solemn, hieractic steps.

"Hail, daughter of Herodias," cried Cronshaw.

The mutton was eaten with gusto, and it did one good to see what a hearty appetite the pale-faced lady had. Clutton and Potter sat on each side of her, and everyone knew that neither had found her unduly coy. She grew tired of most people in six weeks, but she knew exactly how to treat afterwards the gentlemen who had laid their young hearts at her feet. She bore them no ill-will, though having loved them she had ceased to do so, and

treated them with friendliness but without familiarity. Now and then she looked at Lawson with melancholy eyes. The *poires flambées* were a great success, partly because of the brandy, and partly because Miss Chalice insisted that they should be eaten with the cheese.

"I don't know whether it's perfectly delicious, or whether I'm just going to vomit," she said, after she had thoroughly tried the mixture.

Coffee and cognac followed with sufficient speed to prevent any untoward consequence, and they settled down to smoke in comfort. Ruth Chalice, who could no nothing that was not deliberately artistic, arranged herself in a graceful attitude by Cronshaw and just rested her exquisite head on his shoulder. She looked into the dark abyss of time with brooding eyes, and now and then with a long meditative glance at Lawson she sighed deeply.

Then came the summer, and restlessness seized these young people. The blue skies lured them to the sea, and the pleasant breeze sighing through the leaves of the plane-trees on the boulevard drew them towards the country. Everyone made plans for leaving Paris; they discussed what was the most suitable size for the canvases they meant to take; they laid in stores of panels for sketching; they argued about the merits of various places in Brittany. Flanagan and Potter went to Concarneau; Mrs. Otter and her mother, with a natural instinct for the obvious, went to Pont-Aven; Philip and Lawson made up their minds to go to the forest of Fontainebleau, and Miss Chalice knew of a very good hotel at Moret where there was lots of stuff to paint; it was near Paris, and neither Philip nor Lawson was indifferent to the railway fare. Ruth Chalice would be there, and Lawson had an idea for a portrait of her in the open air. Just then the Salon was full of portraits of people in gardens, in sunlight, with blinking eyes and green reflections of sunlit leaves on their faces. They asked Clutton to go with them, but he preferred spending the summer by himself. He had just discovered Cézanne, and was eager to go to Provence; he wanted heavy skies from which the hot blue seemed to drip like beads of sweat, and broad white dusty roads, and pale roofs out of which the sun had burnt the colour, and olive trees gray with heat.

The day before they were to start, after the morning class, Philip, putting his things together, spoke to Fanny Price.

"I'm off tomorrow," he said cheerfully.

"Off where?" she said quickly. "You're not going away?" Her face fell.

"I'm going away for the summer. Aren't you?"

"No, I'm staying in Paris. I thought you were going to stay too. I was looking forward. . . ."

She stopped and shrugged her shoulders.

"But won't it be frightfully hot here? It's awfully bad for you."

"Much you care if it's bad for me. Where are you going?"

"Moret."

"Chalice is going there. You're not going with her?"

"Lawson and I are going. And she's going there too. I don't know that we're actually going together."

She gave a low guttural sound, and her large face grew dark and red.

"How filthy! I thought you were a decent fellow. You were about the only one here. She's been with Clutton and Potter and Flanagan, even with old Foinet—that's why he takes so much trouble about her—and now two of you, you and Lawson. It makes me sick."

"Oh, what nonsense! She's a very decent sort. One treats her just as if she were a man."

"Oh, don't speak to me, don't speak to me."

"But what can it matter to you?" asked Philip. "It's really no business of yours where I spend my summer."

"I was looking forward to it so much," she gasped, speaking it seemed almost to herself. "I didn't think you had the money to go away, and there wouldn't have been anyone else here, and we could have worked together, and we'd have gone to see things." Then her thoughts flung back to Ruth Chalice. "The filthy beast," she cried. "She isn't fit to speak to."

Philip looked at her with a sinking heart. He was not a man to think girls were in love with him; he was too conscious of his deformity, and he felt awkward and clumsy with women; but he did not know what else this outburst could mean. Fanny Price, in the dirty brown dress, with her hair falling over her face, sloppy, untidy, stood before him; and tears of anger rolled down her cheeks. She was repellent. Philip glanced at the door, instinctively hoping that someone would come in and put an end to the scene.

"I'm awfully sorry," he said.

"You're just the same as all of them. You take all you can get, and you don't even say thank you. I've taught you every-

thing you know. No one else would take any trouble with you. Has Foinet ever bothered about you? And I can tell you this—you can work here for a thousand years and you'll never do any good. You haven't got any talent. You haven't got any originality. And it's not only me—they all say it. You'll never be a painter as long as you live."

"That is no business of yours either, is it?" said Philip, flushing.

"Oh, you think it's only my temper. Ask Clutton, ask Lawson, ask Chalice. Never, never, never. You haven't got it in you."

Philip shrugged his shoulders and walked out. She shouted after him.

"Never, never, never."

Moret was in those days an old-fashioned town of one street at the edge of the forest of Fontainebleau, and the *Ecu d'Or* was a hotel which still had about it the decrepit air of the *Ancien Régime*. It faced the winding river, the Loing; and Miss Chalice had a room with a little terrace overlooking it, with a charming view of the old bridge and its fortified gateway. They sat here in the evenings after dinner, drinking coffee, smoking, and discussing art. There ran into the river, a little way off, a narrow canal bordered by poplars, and along the banks of this after their day's work they often wandered. They spent all day painting. Like most of their generation they were obsessed by the fear of the picturesque, and they turned their backs on the obvious beauty of the town to seek subjects which were devoid of a prettiness they despised. Sisley and Monet had painted the canal with its poplars, and they felt a desire to try their hands at what was so typical of France; but they were frightened of its formal beauty, and set themselves deliberately to avoid it. Miss Chalice, who had a clever dexterity which impressed Lawson notwithstanding his contempt for feminine art, started a picture in which she tried to circumvent the commonplace by leaving out the tops of the trees; and Lawson had the brilliant idea of putting in his foreground a large blue advertisement of *chocolat Menier* in order to emphasise his abhorrence of the chocolate box.

Philip began now to paint in oils. He experienced a thrill of delight when first he used that grateful medium. He went out with Lawson in the morning with his little box and sat by him painting a panel; it gave him so much satisfaction that he did not realise he was doing no more than copy; he was so much under his friend's influence that he saw only with his eyes. Lawson

painted very low in tone, and they both saw the emerald of the grass like dark velvet, while the brilliance of the sky turned in their hands to a brooding ultramarine. Through July they had one fine day after another; it was very hot; and the heat, searing Philip's heart, filled him with languor; he could not work; his mind was eager with a thousand thoughts. Often he spent the mornings by the side of the canal in the shade of the poplars, reading a few lines and then dreaming for half an hour. Sometimes he hired a rickety bicycle and rode along the dusty road that led to the forest, and then lay down in a clearing. His head was full of romantic fancies. The ladies of Watteau, gay and insouciant, seemed to wander with their cavaliers among the great trees, whispering to one another careless, charming things, and yet somehow oppressed by a nameless fear.

They were alone in the hotel but for a fat Frenchwoman of middle age, a Rabelaisian figure with a broad, obscene laugh. She spent the day by the river patiently fishing for fish she never caught, and Philip sometimes went down and talked to her. He found out that she had belonged to a profession whose most notorious member for our generation was Mrs. Warren, and having made a competence she now lived the quiet life of the *bourgeoise*. She told Philip lewd stories.

"You must go to Seville," she said—she spoke a little broken English. "The most beautiful women in the world."

She leered and nodded her head. Her triple chin, her large belly, shook with inward laughter.

It grew so hot that it was almost impossible to sleep at night. The heat seemed to linger under the trees as though it were a material thing. They did not wish to leave the starlit night, and the three of them would sit on the terrace of Ruth Chalice's room, silent, hour after hour, too tired to talk any more, but in voluptuous enjoyment of the stillness. They listened to the murmur of the river. The church clock struck one and two and sometimes three before they could drag themselves to bed. Suddenly Philip became aware that Ruth Chalice and Lawson were lovers. He divined it in the way the girl looked at the young painter, and in his air of possession; and as Philip sat with them he felt a kind of effluence surrounding them, as though the air were heavy with something strange. The revelation was a shock. He had looked upon Miss Chalice as a very good fellow and he liked to talk to her, but it had never seemed to him possible to enter into a closer relationship. One Sunday they had all gone with a tea-basket into the forest, and when they came to a glade which

was suitably sylvan, Miss Chalice, because it was idyllic, insisted on taking off her shoes and stockings. It would have been very charming only her feet were rather large and she had on both a large corn on the third toe. Philip felt it made her proceeding a little ridiculous. But now he looked upon her quite differently; there was something softly feminine in her large eyes and her olive skin; he felt himself a fool not to have seen that she was attractive. He thought he detected in her a touch of contempt for him, because he had not had the sense to see that she was there, in his way, and in Lawson a suspicion of superiority. He was envious of Lawson, and he was jealous, not of the individual concerned, but of his love. He wished that he was standing in his shoes and feeling with his heart. He was troubled, and the fear seized him that love would pass him by. He wanted a passion to seize him, he wanted to be swept off his feet and borne powerless in a mighty rush he cared not whither. Miss Chalice and Lawson seemed to him now somehow different, and the constant companionship with them made him restless. He was dissatisfied with himself. Life was not giving him what he wanted, and he had an uneasy feeling that he was losing his time.

The stout Frenchwoman soon guessed what the relations were between the couple, and talked of the matter to Philip with the utmost frankness.

"And you," she said, with the tolerant smile of one who had fattened on the lust of her fellows, "have you got a *petite amie?*"

"No," said Philip, blushing.

"And why not? *C'est de votre age.*"

He shrugged his shoulders. He had a volume of Verlaine in his hands, and he wandered off. He tried to read, but his passion was too strong. He thought of the stray amours to which he had been introduced by Flanagan, the sly visits to houses in a *cul-de-sac,* with the drawing-room in Utrecht velvet, and the mercenary graces of painted women. He shuddered. He threw himself on the grass, stretching his limbs like a young animal freshly awaked from sleep; and the rippling water, the poplars gently tremulous in the faint breeze, the blue sky, were almost more than he could bear. He was in love with love. In his fancy he felt the kiss of warm lips on his, and around his neck the touch of soft hands. He imagined himself in the arms of Ruth Chalice, he thought of her dark eyes and the wonderful texture of her skin; he was mad to have let such a wonderful adventure slip through his fingers. And if Lawson had done it why should not he? But this was only when he did not see her, when he lay awake at night or

dreamed idly by the side of the canal; when he saw her he felt suddenly quite different; he had no desire to take her in his arms, and he could not imagine himself kissing her. It was very curious. Away from her he thought her beautiful, remembering only her magnificent eyes and the creamy pallor of her face; but when he was with her he saw only that she was flat-chested and that her teeth were slightly decayed; he could not forget the corns on her toes. He could not understand himself. Would he always love only in absence and be prevented from enjoying anything when he had the chance by that deformity of vision which seemed to exaggerate the revolting?

He was not sorry when a change in the weather, announcing the definite end of the long summer, drove them all back to Paris.

XLVIII

When Philip returned to Amitrano's he found that Fanny Price was no longer working there. She had given up the key of her locker. He asked Mrs. Otter whether she knew what had become of her; and Mrs. Otter, with a shrug of the shoulders, answered that she had probably gone back to England. Philip was relieved. He was profoundly bored by her ill-temper. Moreover she insisted on advising him about his work, looked upon it as a slight when he did not follow her precepts, and would not understand that he felt himself no longer the duffer he had been at first. Soon he forgot all about her. He was working in oils now and he was full of enthusiasm. He hoped to have something done of sufficient importance to send to the following year's Salon. Lawson was painting a portrait of Miss Chalice. She was very paintable, and all the young men who had fallen victims to her charm had made portraits of her. A natural indolence, joined with a passion for picturesque attitude, made her an excellent sitter; and she had enough technical knowledge to offer useful criticisms. Since her passion for art was chiefly a passion to live the life of artists, she was quite content to neglect her own work. She liked the warmth of the studio, and the opportunity to smoke innumerable cigarettes; and she spoke in a low, pleasant voice of the love of art and the art of love. She made no clear distinction between the two.

Lawson was painting with infinite labour, working till he could hardly stand for days and then scraping out all he had done. He would have exhausted the patience of anyone but Ruth Chalice At last he got into a hopeless muddle.

"The only thing is to take a new canvas and start fresh," he said "I know exactly what I want now, and it won't take me long."

Philip was present at the time, and Miss Chalice said to him:

"Why don't you paint me too? You'll be able to learn a lot by watching Mr. Lawson."

It was one of Miss Chalice's delicacies that she always addressed her lovers by their surnames.

"I should like it awfully if Lawson wouldn't mind."

"I don't care a damn," said Lawson.

It was the first time that Philip set about a portrait. and he

began with trepidation but also with pride. He sat by Lawson and painted as he saw him paint. He profited by the example and by the advice which both Lawson and Miss Chalice freely gave him. At last Lawson finished and invited Clutton in to criticise. Clutton had only just come back to Paris. From Provence he had drifted down to Spain, eager to see Velasquez at Madrid, and thence he had gone to Toledo. He stayed there three months, and he was returned with a name new to the young men: he had wonderful things to say of a painter called El Greco, who it appeared could only be studied in Toledo.

"Oh yes, I know about him," said Lawson, "he's the old master whose distinction it is that he painted as badly as the moderns."

Clutton, more taciturn than ever, did not answer, but he looked at Lawson with a sardonic air.

"Are you going to show us the stuff you've brought back from Spain?" asked Philip.

"I didn't paint in Spain, I was too busy."

"What did you do then?"

"I thought things out. I believe I'm through with the Impressionists; I've got an idea they'll seem very thin and superficial in a few years. I want to make a clean sweep of everything I've learnt and start fresh. When I came back I destroyed everything I'd painted. I've got nothing in my studio now but an easel, my paints, and some clean canvases."

"What are you going to do?"

"I don't know yet. I've only got an inkling of what I want."

He spoke slowly, in a curious manner, as though he were straining to hear something which was only just audible. There seemed to be a mysterious force in him which he himself did not understand, but which was struggling obscurely to find an outlet. His strength impressed you. Lawson dreaded the criticism he asked for and had discounted the blame he thought he might get by affecting a contempt for any opinion of Clutton's; but Philip knew there was nothing which would give him more pleasure than Clutton's praise. Clutton looked at the portrait for some time in silence, then glanced at Philip's picture, which was standing on an easel.

"What's that?" he asked.

"Oh, I had a shot at a portrait too."

"The sedulous ape," he murmured.

He turned away again to Lawson's canvas. Philip reddened but did not speak.

"Well, what d'you think of it?" asked Lawson at length.

"The modelling's jolly good," said Clutton. "And I think it's very well drawn."

"D'you think the values are all right?"

"Quite."

Lawson smiled with delight. He shook himself in his clothes like a wet dog.

"I say, I'm jolly glad you like it."

"I don't. I don't think it's of the smallest importance."

Lawson's face fell, and he stared at Clutton with astonishment: he had no notion what he meant. Clutton had no gift of expression in words, and he spoke as though it were an effort. What he had to say was confused, halting, and verbose; but Philip knew the words which served as the text of his rambling discourse. Clutton, who never read, had heard them first from Cronshaw; and though they had made small impression, they had remained in his memory; and lately, emerging on a sudden, had acquired the character of a revelation: a good painter had two chief objects to paint, namely, man and the intention of his soul. The Impressionists had been occupied with other problems, they had painted man admirably, but they had troubled themselves as little as the English portrait painters of the eighteenth century with the intention of his soul.

"But when you try to get that you become literary," said Lawson, interrupting. "Let me paint the man like Manet, and the intention of his soul can go to the devil."

"That would be all very well if you could beat Manet at his own game, but you can't get anywhere near him. You can't feed yourself on the day before yesterday, it's ground which has been swept dry. You must go back. It's when I saw the Grecos that I felt one could get something more out of portraits than we knew before."

"It's just going back to Ruskin," cried Lawson.

"No—you see, he went for morality: I don't care a damn for morality: teaching doesn't come in, ethics and all that, but passion and emotion. The greatest portrait painters have painted both, man and the intention of his soul; Rembrandt and El Greco; it's only the second-raters who've only painted man. A lily of the valley would be lovely even if it didn't smell, but it's more lovely because it has perfume. That picture"—he pointed to Lawson's portrait—"Well, the drawing's all right and so's the modelling all right, but just conventional; it ought to be drawn and modelled so that you know the girl's a lousy slut. Correctness is all very well: El Greco made his people eight feet high because he wanted to express something he couldn't get any other way."

"Damn El Greco," said Lawson, "what's the good of jawing about a man when we haven't a chance of seeing any of his work?"

Clutton shrugged his shoulders, smoked a cigarette in silence, and went away. Philip and Lawson looked at one another.

"There's something in what he says," said Philip.

Lawson stared ill-temperedly at his picture.

"How the devil is one to get the intention of the soul except by painting exactly what one sees?"

About this time Philip made a new friend. On Monday morning models assembled at the school in order that one might be chosen for the week, and one day a young man was taken who was plainly not a model by profession. Philip's attention was attracted by the manner in which he held himself: when he got on to the stand he stood firmly on both feet, square, with clenched hands, and with his head defiantly thrown forward; the attitude emphasised his fine figure; there was no fat on him, and his muscles stood out as though they were of iron. His head, close-cropped, was well-shaped, and he wore a short beard; he had large, dark eyes and heavy eyebrows. He held the pose hour after hour without appearance of fatigue. There was in his mien a mixture of shame and of determination. His air of passionate energy excited Philip's romantic imagination, and when, the sitting ended, he saw him in his clothes, it seemed to him that he wore them as though he were a king in rags. He was uncommunicative, but in a day or two Mrs. Otter told Philip that the model was a Spaniard and that he had never sat before.

"I suppose he was starving," said Philip.

"Have you noticed his clothes? They're quite neat and decent, aren't they?"

It chanced that Potter, one of the Americans who worked at Amitrano's, was going to Italy for a couple of months, and offered his studio to Philip. Philip was pleased. He was growing a little impatient of Lawson's peremptory advice and wanted to be by himself. At the end of the week he went up to the model and on the pretence that his drawing was not finished asked whether he would come and sit to him one day.

"I'm not a model," the Spaniard answered. "I have other things to do next week."

"Come and have luncheon with me now, and we'll talk about it," said Philip, and as the other hesitated, he added with a smile: "It won't hurt you to lunch with me."

With a shrug of the shoulders the model consented, and they went off to a *crémerie*. The Spaniard spoke broken French, fluent but difficult to follow, and Philip managed to get on well enough with him. He found out that he was a writer. He had come to Paris to write novels and kept himself meanwhile by all the expedients possible to a penniless man: he gave lessons, he did any translations he could get hold of, chiefly business documents, and at last had been driven to make money by his fine figure. Sitting was well paid, and what he had earned during the last week was enough to keep him for two more; he told Philip, amazed, that he could live easily on two francs a day; but it filled him with shame that he was obliged to show his body for money, and he looked upon sitting as a degradation which only hunger could excuse. Philip explained that he did not want him to sit for the figure, but only for the head; he wished to do a portrait of him which he might send to the next Salon.

"But why should you want to paint me?" asked the Spaniard.

Philip answered that the head interested him, he thought he could do a good portrait.

"I can't afford the time. I grudge every minute that I have to rob from my writing."

"But it would only be in the afternoon. I work at the school in the morning. After all, it's better to sit to me than to do translations of legal documents."

There were legends in the Latin Quarter of a time when students of different countries lived together intimately, but this was long since passed, and now the various nations were almost as much separated as in an Oriental city. At Julian's and at the Beaux Arts a French student was looked upon with disfavour by his fellow-countrymen when he consorted with foreigners, and it was difficult for an Englishman to know more than quite superficially any native inhabitants of the city in which he dwelt. Indeed, many of the students after living in Paris for five years knew no more French than served them in shops and lived as English a life as though they were working in South Kensington.

Philip, with his passion for the romantic, welcomed the opportunity to get in touch with a Spaniard; he used all his persuasiveness to overcome the man's reluctance.

"I'll tell you what I'll do," said the Spaniard at last. "I'll sit to you, but not for money, for my own pleasure."

Philip expostulated, but the other was firm, and at length they arranged that he should come on the following Monday at one

o'clock. He gave Philip a card on which was printed his name: Miguel Ajuria.

Miguel sat regularly, and though he refused to accept payment he borrowed fifty francs from Philip every now and then: it was a little more expensive than if Philip had paid for the sittings in the usual way; but gave the Spaniard a satisfactory feeling that he was not earning his living in a degrading manner. His nationality made Philip regard him as a representative of romance, and he asked him about Seville and Granada, Velasquez and Calderon. But Miguel had no patience with the grandeur of his country. For him, as for so many of his compatriots, France was the only country for a man of intelligence and Paris the centre of the world.

"Spain is dead," he cried. "It has no writers, it has no art, it has nothing."

Little by little, with the exuberant rhetoric of his race, he revealed his ambitions. He was writing a novel which he hoped would make his name. He was under the influence of Zola, and he had set his scene in Paris. He told Philip the story at length. To Philip it seemed crude and stupid; the naïve obscenity—*c'est la vie, mon cher, c'est la vie,* he cried—the naïve obscenity served only to emphasise the conventionality of the anecdote. He had written for two years, amid incredible hardships, denying himself all the pleasures of life which had attracted him to Paris, fighting with starvation for art's sake, determined that nothing should hinder his great achievement. The effort was heroic.

"But why don't you write about Spain?" cried Philip. "It would be so much more interesting. You know the life."

"But Paris is the only place worth writing about. Paris is life."

One day he brought part of the manuscript, and in his bad French, translating excitedly as he went along so that Philip could scarcely understand, he read passages. It was lamentable. Philip, puzzled, looked at the picture he was painting: the mind behind that broad brow was trivial; and the flashing, passionate eyes saw nothing in life but the obvious. Philip was not satisfied with his portrait, and at the end of a sitting he nearly always scraped out what he had done. It was all very well to aim at the intention of the soul: who could tell what that was when people seemed a mass of contradictions? He liked Miguel, and it distressed him to realise that his magnificent struggle was futile: he had everything to make a good writer but talent. Philip looked at his own work. How could you tell whether there was anything in it or

whether you were wasting your time? It was clear that the will to achieve could not help you and confidence in yourself meant nothing. Philip thought of Fanny Price; she had a vehement belief in her talent; her strength of will was extraordinary.

"If I thought I wasn't going to be really good, I'd rather give up painting," said Philip. "I don't see any use in being a second-rate painter."

Then one morning when he was going out, the *concierge* called out to him that there was a letter. Nobody wrote to him but his Aunt Louisa and sometimes Hayward, and this was a handwriting he did not know. The letter was as follows:

Please come at once when you get this. I couldn't put up with it any more. Please come yourself. I can't bear the thought that anyone else should touch me. I want you to have everything.

F. Price.

I have not had anything to eat for three days.

Philip felt on a sudden sick with fear. He hurried to the house in which she lived. He was astonished that she was in Paris at all. He had not seen her for months and imagined she had long since returned to England. When he arrived he asked the *concierge* whether she was in.

"Yes, I've not seen her go out for two days."

Philip ran upstairs and knocked at the door. There was no reply. He called her name. The door was locked, and on bending down he found the key was in the lock.

"Oh, my God, I hope she hasn't done something awful," he cried aloud.

He ran down and told the porter that she was certainly in the room. He had had a letter from her and feared a terrible accident. He suggested breaking open the door. The porter, who had been sullen and disinclined to listen, became alarmed; he could not take the responsibility of breaking into the room; they must go for the *commissaire de police.* They walked together to the *bureau,* and then they fetched a locksmith. Philip found that Miss Price had not paid the last quarter's rent: on New Year's Day she had not given the *concierge* the present which old-established custom led him to regard as a right. The four of them went upstairs, and they knocked again at the door. There was no reply. The locksmith set to work, and at last they entered the room. Philip gave a cry and instinctively covered his eyes with his hands. The wretched woman was hanging with a rope round her neck, which

she had tied to a hook in the ceiling fixed by some previous tenant to hold up the curtains of the bed. She had moved her own little bed out of the way and had stood on a chair, which had been kicked away. It was lying on its side on the floor. They cut her down. The body was quite cold.

XLIX

THE story which Philip made out in one way and another was terrible. One of the grievances of the women-students was that Fanny Price would never share their gay meals in restaurants, and the reason was obvious: she had been oppressed by dire poverty. He remembered the luncheon they had eaten together when first he came to Paris and the ghoulish appetite which had disgusted him: he realised now that she ate in that manner because she was ravenous. The *concierge* told him what her food had consisted of. A bottle of milk was left for her every day and she brought in her own loaf of bread; she ate half the loaf and drank half the milk at mid-day when she came back from the school, and consumed the rest in the evening. It was the same day after day. Philip thought with anguish of what she must have endured. She had never given anyone to understand that she was poorer than the rest, but it was clear that her money had been coming to an end, and at last she could not afford to come any more to the studio. The little room was almost bare of furniture, and there were no other clothes than the shabby brown dress she had always worn. Philip searched among her things for the address of some friend with whom he could communicate. He found a piece of paper on which his own name was written a score of times. It gave him a peculiar shock. He supposed it was true that she had loved him; he thought of the emaciated body, in the brown dress hanging from the nail in the ceiling; and he shuddered. But if she had cared for him why did she not let him help her? He would so gladly have done all he could. He felt remorseful because he had refused to see that she looked upon him with any particular feeling, and now these words in her letter were infinitely pathetic: *I can't bear the thought that anyone else should touch me.* She had died of starvation.

Philip found at length a letter signed: *your loving brother, Albert.* It was two or three weeks old, dated from some road in Surbiton, and refused a loan of five pounds. The writer had his wife and family to think of, he didn't feel justified in lending money, and his advice was that Fanny should come back to London and try to get a situation. Philip telegraphed to Albert Price, and in a little while an answer came:

"Deeply distressed. Very awkward to leave my business. Is presence essential? Price."

Philip wired a succinct affirmative, and next morning a stranger presented himself at the studio.

"My name's Price," he said, when Philip opened the door.

He was a commonish man in black with a band round his bowler hat; he had something of Fanny's clumsy look; he wore a stubbly moustache, and had a Cockney accent. Philip asked him to come in. He cast sidelong glances round the studio while Philip gave him details of the accident and told him what he had done.

"I needn't see her, need I?" asked Albert Price. "My nerves aren't very strong, and it takes very little to upset me."

He began to talk freely. He was a rubber-merchant, and he had a wife and three children. Fanny was a governess, and he couldn't make out why she hadn't stuck to that instead of coming to Paris.

"Me and Mrs. Price told her Paris was no place for a girl. And there's no money in art—never 'as been."

It was plain enough that he had not been on friendly terms with his sister, and he resented her suicide as a last injury that she had done him. He did not like the idea that she had been forced to it by poverty; that seemed to reflect on the family. The idea struck him that possibly there was a more respectable reason for her act.

"I suppose she 'adn't any trouble with a man, 'ad she? You know what I mean, Paris and all that. She might 'ave done it so as not to disgrace herself."

Philip felt himself reddening and cursed his weakness. Price's keen little eyes seemed to suspect him of an intrigue.

"I believe your sister to have been perfectly virtuous," he answered acidly. "She killed herself because she was starving."

"Well, it's very 'ard on her family, Mr. Carey. She only 'ad to write to me. I wouldn't have let my sister want."

Philip had found the brother's address only by reading the letter in which he refused a loan; but he shrugged his shoulders: there was no use in recrimination. He hated the little man and wanted to have done with him as soon as possible. Albert Price also wished to get through the necessary business quickly so that he could get back to London. They went to the tiny room in which poor Fanny had lived. Albert Price looked at the pictures and the furniture.

"I don't pretend to know much about art," he said. "I suppos these pictures would fetch something, would they?"

"Nothing," said Philip.

"The furniture's not worth ten shillings."

Albert Price knew no French and Philip had to do everything. It seemed that it was an interminable process to get the poor body safely hidden away under ground: papers had to be obtained in one place and signed in another; officials had to be seen. For three days Philip was occupied from morning till night. At last he and Albert Price followed the hearse to the cemetery at Montparnasse.

"I want to do the thing decent," said Albert Price, "but there's no use wasting money."

The short ceremony was infinitely dreadful in the cold gray morning. Half a dozen people who had worked with Fanny Price at the studio came to the funeral, Mrs. Otter because she was *massière* and thought it her duty, Ruth Chalice because she had a kind heart, Lawson, Clutton, and Flanagan. They had all disliked her during her life. Philip, looking across the cemetery crowded on all sides with monuments, some poor and simple, others vulgar, pretentious, and ugly, shuddered. It was horribly sordid. When they came out Albert Price asked Philip to lunch with him. Philip loathed him now and he was tired; he had not been sleeping well, for he dreamed constantly of Fanny Price in the torn brown dress, hanging from the nail in the ceiling; but he could not think of an excuse.

"You take me somewhere where we can get a regular slap-up lunch. All this is the very worst thing for my nerves."

"Lavenue's is about the best place round here," answered Philip.

Albert Price settled himself on a velvet seat with a sigh of relief. He ordered a substantial luncheon and a bottle of wine.

"Well, I'm glad that's over," he said.

He threw out a few artful questions, and Philip discovered that he was eager to hear about the painter's life in Paris. He represented it to himself as deplorable, but he was anxious for details of the orgies which his fancy suggested to him. With sly winks and discreet sniggering he conveyed that he knew very well that there was a great deal more than Philip confessed. He was a man of the world, and he knew a thing or two. He asked Philip whether he had ever been to any of those places in Montmartre which are celebrated from Temple Bar to the Royal Exchange. He would like to say he had been to the Moulin Rouge. The luncheon was very good and the wine excellent. Albert Price expanded as the processes of digestion went satisfactorily forwards.

"Let's 'ave a little brandy," he said when the coffee was brought, "and blow the expense."

He rubbed his hands.

"You know, I've got 'alf a mind to stay over tonight and go back tomorrow. What d'you say to spending the evening together?"

"If you mean you want me to take you round Montmartre tonight, I'll see you damned," said Philip.

"I suppose it wouldn't be quite the thing."

The answer was made so seriously that Philip was tickled.

"Besides it would be rotten for your nerves," he said gravely.

Albert Price concluded that he had better go back to London by the four o'clock train, and presently he took leave of Philip.

"Well, good-bye, old man," he said. "I tell you what, I'll try and come over to Paris again one of these days and I'll look you up. And then we won't 'alf go on the razzle."

Philip was too restless to work that afternoon, so he jumped on a bus and crossed the river to see whether there were any pictures on view at Durand-Ruel's. After that he strolled along the boulevard. It was cold and wind-swept. People hurried by wrapped up in their coats, shrunk together in an effort to keep out of the cold, and their faces were pinched and careworn. It was icy underground in the cemetery at Montparnasse among all those white tombstones. Philip felt lonely in the world and strangely home-sick. He wanted company. At that hour Cronshaw would be working, and Clutton never welcomed visitors; Lawson was painting another portrait of Ruth Chalice and would not care to be disturbed. He made up his mind to go and see Flanagan. He found him painting, but delighted to throw up his work and talk. The studio was comfortable, for the American had more money than most of them, and warm; Flanagan set about making tea. Philip looked at the two heads that he was sending to the Salon.

"It's awful cheek my sending anything," said Flanagan, "but I don't care, I'm going to send. D'you think they're rotten?"

"Not so rotten as I should have expected," said Philip.

They showed in fact an astounding cleverness. The difficulties had been avoided with skill, and there was a dash about the way in which the paint was put on which was surprising and even attractive. Flanagan, without knowledge or technique, painted with the loose brush of a man who has spent a lifetime in the practice of the art.

"If one were forbidden to look at any picture for more than thirty seconds you'd be a great master, Flanagan," smiled Philip

These young people were not in the habit of spoiling one another with excessive flattery.

"We haven't got time in America to spend more than thirty seconds in looking at any picture," laughed the other.

Flanagan, though he was the most scatter-brained person in the world, had a tenderness of heart which was unexpected and charming. Whenever anyone was ill he installed himself as sick-nurse. His gaiety was better than any medicine. Like many of his countrymen he had not the English dread of sentimentality which keeps so tight a hold on emotion; and, finding nothing absurd in the show of feeling, could offer an exuberant sympathy which was often grateful to his friends in distress. He saw that Philip was depressed by what he had gone through and with unaffected kindliness set himself boisterously to cheer him up. He exaggerated the Americanisms which he knew always made the Englishmen laugh and poured out a breathless stream of conversation, whimsical, high-spirited, and jolly. In due course they went out to dinner and afterwards to the Gaîté Montparnasse, which was Flanagan's favourite place of amusement. By the end of the evening he was in his most extravagant humour. He had drunk a good deal, but any inebriety from which he suffered was due much more to his own vivacity than to alcohol. He proposed that they should go to the Bal Bullier, and Philip, feeling too tired to go to bed, willingly enough consented. They sat down at a table on the platform at the side, raised a little from the level of the floor so that they could watch the dancing, and drank a bock. Presently Flanagan saw a friend and with a wild shout leaped over the barrier on to the space where they were dancing. Philip watched the people. Bullier was not the resort of fashion. It was Thursday night and the place was crowded. There were a number of students of the various faculties, but most of the men were clerks or assistants in shops; they wore their every-day clothes, ready-made tweeds or queer tail-coats, and their hats, for they had brought them in with them, and when they danced there was no place to put them but their heads. Some of the women looked like servant-girls, and some were painted hussies, but for the most part they were shop-girls. They were poorly-dressed in cheap imitation of the fashions on the other side of the river. The hussies were got up to resemble the music-hall artiste or the dancer who enjoyed notoriety at the moment; their eyes were heavy with black and their cheeks impudently scarlet. The hall was lit by great white lights, low down, which emphasised the shadows on the faces; all the lines seemed to harden under it,

and the colours were most crude. It was a sordid scene. Philip leaned over the rail, staring down, and he ceased to hear the music. They danced furiously. They danced round the room, slowly, talking very little, with all their attention given to the dance. The room was hot, and their faces shone with sweat. It seemed to Philip that they had thrown off the guard which people wear on their expression, the homage to convention, and he saw them now as they really were. In that moment of abandon they were strangely animal: some were foxy and some were wolflike; and others had the long, foolish face of sheep. Their skins were sallow from the unhealthy life they led and the poor food they ate. Their features were blunted by mean interests, and their little eyes were shifty and cunning. There was nothing of nobility in their bearing, and you felt that for all of them life was a long succession of petty concerns and sordid thoughts. The air was heavy with the musty smell of humanity. But they danced furiously as though impelled by some strange power within them, and it seemed to Philip that they were driven forward by a rage for enjoyment. They were seeking desperately to escape from a world of horror. The desire for pleasure which Cronshaw said was the only motive of human action urged them blindly on, and the very vehemence of the desire seemed to rob it of all pleasure. They were hurried on by a great wind, helplessly, they knew not why and they knew not whither. Fate seemed to tower above them, and they danced as though everlasting darkness were beneath their feet. Their silence was vaguely alarming. It was as if life terrified them and robbed them of power of speech so that the shriek which was in their hearts died at their throats. Their eyes were haggard and grim; and notwithstanding the beastly lust that disfigured them, and the meanness of their faces, and the cruelty, notwithstanding the stupidness which was worst of all, the anguish of those fixed eyes made all that crowd terrible and pathetic. Philip loathed them, and yet his heart ached with the infinite pity which filled him.

He took his coat from the cloak-room and went out into the bitter coldness of the night.

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Philip could not get the unhappy event out of his head. What troubled him most was the uselessness of Fanny's effort. No one could have worked harder than she, nor with more sincerity; she believed in herself with all her heart; but it was plain that self-confidence meant very little, all his friends had it, Miguel Ajuria among the rest; and Philip was shocked by the contrast between the Spaniard's heroic endeavour and the triviality of the thing he attempted. The unhappiness of Philip's life at school had called up in him the power of self-analysis; and this vice, as subtle as drug-taking, had taken possession of him so that he had now a peculiar keenness in the dissection of his feelings. He could not help seeing that art affected him differently from others. A fine picture gave Lawson an immediate thrill. His appreciation was instinctive. Even Flanagan felt certain things which Philip was obliged to think out. His own appreciation was intellectual. He could not help thinking that if he had in him the artistic temperament (he hated the phrase, but could discover no other) he would feel beauty in the emotional, unreasoning way in which they did. He began to wonder whether he had anything more than a superficial cleverness of the hand which enabled him to copy objects with accuracy. That was nothing. He had learned to despise technical dexterity. The important thing was to feel in terms of paint. Lawson painted in a certain way because it was his nature to, and through the imitativeness of a student sensitive to every influence, there pierced individuality. Philip looked at his own portrait of Ruth Chalice, and now that three months had passed he realised that it was no more than a servile copy of Lawson. He felt himself barren. He painted with the brain, and he could not help knowing that the only painting worth anything was done with the heart.

He had very little money, barely sixteen hundred pounds, and it would be necessary for him to practise the severest economy. He could not count on earning anything for ten years. The history of painting was full of artists who had earned nothing at all. He must resign himself to penury; and it was worth while if he produced work which was immortal; but he had a terrible fear that he would never be more than second-rate. Was it worth while for

that to give up one's youth, and the gaiety of life, and the manifold chances of being? He knew the existence of foreign painters in Paris enough to see that the lives they led were narrowly provincial. He knew some who had dragged along for twenty years in the pursuit of a fame which always escaped them till they sunk into sordidness and alcoholism. Fanny's suicide had aroused memories, and Philip heard ghastly stories of the way in which one person or another had escaped from despair. He remembered the scornful advice which the master had given poor Fanny: it would have been well for her if she had taken it and given up an attempt which was hopeless.

Philip finished his portrait of Miguel Ajuria and made up his mind to send it to the Salon. Flanagan was sending two pictures, and he thought he could paint as well as Flanagan. He had worked so hard on the portrait that he could not help feeling it must have merit. It was true that when he looked at it he felt that there was something wrong, though he could not tell what; but when he was away from it his spirits went up and he was not dissatisfied. He sent it to the Salon and it was refused. He did not mind much, since he had done all he could to persuade himself that there was little chance that it would be taken, till Flanagan a few days later rushed in to tell Lawson and Philip that one of his pictures was accepted. With a blank face Philip offered his congratulations, and Flanagan was so busy congratulating himself that he did not catch the note of irony which Philip could not prevent from coming into his voice. Lawson, quicker-witted, observed it and looked at Philip curiously. His own picture was all right, he knew that a day or two before, and he was vaguely resentful of Philip's attitude. But he was surprised at the sudden question which Philip put him as soon as the American was gone.

"If you were in my place would you chuck the whole thing?"

"What *do* you mean?"

"I wonder if it's worth while being a second-rate painter. You see, in other things, if you're a doctor or if you're in business, it doesn't matter so much if you're mediocre. You make a living and you get along. But what is the good of turning out second-rate pictures?"

Lawson was fond of Philip and, as soon as he thought he was seriously distressed by the refusal of his picture, he set himself to console him. It was notorious that the Salon had refused pictures which were afterwards famous; it was the first time Philip had sent, and he must expect a rebuff; Flanagan's success was

explicable, his picture was showy and superficial: it was just the sort of thing a languid jury would see merit in. Philip grew impatient; it was humiliating that Lawson should think him capable of being seriously disturbed by so trivial a calamity and would not realise that his dejection was due to a deep-seated distrust of his powers.

Of late Clutton had withdrawn himself somewhat from the group who took their meals at Gravier's, and lived very much by himself. Flanagan said he was in love with a girl, but Clutton's austere countenance did not suggest passion; and Philip thought it more probable that he separated himself from his friends so that he might grow clear with the new ideas which were in him. But that evening, when the others had left the restaurant to go to a play and Philip was sitting alone, Clutton came in and ordered dinner. They began to talk, and finding Clutton more loquacious and less sardonic than usual, Philip determined to take advantage of his good humour.

"I say I wish you'd come and look at my picture," he said. "I'd like to know what you think of it."

"No, I won't do that."

"Why not?" asked Philip, reddening.

The request was one which they all made of one another, and no one ever thought of refusing. Clutton shrugged his shoulders.

"People ask you for criticism, but they only want praise. Besides, what's the good of criticism? What does it matter if your picture is good or bad?"

"It matters to me."

"No. The only reason that one paints is that one can't help it. It's a function like any of the other functions of the body, only comparatively few people have got it. One paints for oneself: otherwise one would commit suicide. Just think of it, you spend God knows how long trying to get something on to canvas, putting the sweat of your soul into it, and what is the result? Ten to one it will be refused at the Salon; if it's accepted, people glance at it for ten seconds as they pass; if you're lucky some ignorant fool will buy it and put it on his walls and look at it as little as he looks at his dining-room table. Criticism has nothing to do with the artist. It judges objectively, but the objective doesn't concern the artist."

Clutton put his hands over his eyes so that he might concentrate his mind on what he wanted to say.

"The artist gets a peculiar sensation from something he sees, and is impelled to express it and, he doesn't know why, he can

only express his feeling by lines and colours. It's like a musician; he'll read a line or two, and a certain combination of notes presents itself to him: he doesn't know why such and such words call forth in him such and such notes; they just do. And I'll tell you another reason why criticism is meaningless: a great painter forces the world to see nature as he sees it; but in the next generation another painter sees the world in another way, and then the public judges him not by himself but by his predecessor. So the Barbizon people taught our fathers to look at trees in a certain manner, and when Monet came along and painted differently, people said: But trees aren't like that. It never struck them that trees are exactly how a painter chooses to see them. We paint from within outwards—if we force our vision on the world it calls us great painters; if we don't it ignores us; but *we* are the same. We don't attach any meaning to greatness or to smallness. What happens to our work afterwards is unimportant; we have got all we could out of it while we were doing it."

There was a pause while Clutton with voracious appetite devoured the food that was set before him. Philip, smoking a cheap cigar, observed him closely. The ruggedness of the head, which looked as though it were carved from a stone refractory to the sculptor's chisel, the rough mane of dark hair, the great nose, and the massive bones of the jaw, suggested a man of strength; and yet Philip wondered whether perhaps the mask concealed a strange weakness. Clutton's refusal to show his work might be sheer vanity: he could not bear the thought of anyone's criticism, and he would not expose himself to the chance of a refusal from the Salon; he wanted to be received as a master and would not risk comparisons with other work which might force him to diminish his own opinion of himself. During the eighteen months Philip had known him Clutton had grown more harsh and bitter; though he would not come out into the open and compete with his fellows, he was indignant with the facile success of those who did. He had no patience with Lawson, and the pair were no longer on the intimate terms upon which they had been when Philip first knew them.

"Lawson's all right," he said contemptuously, "he'll go back to England, become a fashionable portrait painter, earn ten thousand a year and be an A. R. A. before he's forty. Portraits done by hand for the nobility and gentry!"

Philip, too, looked into the future, and he saw Clutton in twenty years, bitter, lonely, savage, and unknown; still in Paris, for the life there had got into his bones, ruling a small *cénacle* with a

savage tongue, at war with himself and the world, producing little in his increasing passion for a perfection he could not reach; and perhaps sinking at last into drunkenness. Of late Philip had been captivated by an idea that since one had only one life it was important to make a success of it, but he did not count success by the acquiring of money or the achieving of fame; he did not quite know yet what he meant by it, perhaps variety of experience and the making the most of his abilities. It was plain anyway that the life which Clutton seemed destined to was failure. Its only justification would be the painting of imperishable masterpieces. He recollected Cronshaw's whimsical metaphor of the Persian carpet; he had thought of it often; but Cronshaw with his faun-like humour had refused to make his meaning clear: he repeated that it had none unless one discovered it for oneself. It was this desire to make a success of life which was at the bottom of Philip's uncertainty about continuing his artistic career. But Clutton began to talk again.

"D'you remember my telling you about that chap I met in Brittany? I saw him the other day here. He's just off to Tahiti. He was broke to the world. He was a *brasseur d'affaires,* a stockbroker I suppose you call it in English; and he had a wife and family, and he was earning a large income. He chucked it all to become a painter. He just went off and settled down in Brittany and began to paint. He hadn't got any money and did the next best thing to starving."

"And what about his wife and family?" asked Philip.

"Oh, he dropped them. He left them to starve on their own account."

"It sounds a pretty low-down thing to do."

"Oh, my dear fellow, if you want to be a gentleman you must give up being an artist. They've got nothing to do with one another. You hear of men painting pot-boilers to keep an aged mother—well, it shows they're excellent sons, but it's no excuse for bad work. They're only tradesmen. An artist would let his mother go to the workhouse. There's a writer I know over here who told me that his wife died in childbirth. He was in love with her and he was mad with grief, but as he sat at the bedside watching her die he found himself making mental notes of how she looked and what she said and the things he was feeling. Gentlemanly, wasn't it?"

"But is your friend a good painter?" asked Philip.

"No, not yet, he paints just like Pissarro. He hasn't found himself, but he's got a sense of colour and a sense of decoration.

But that isn't the question. It's the feeling, and that he's got. He's behaved like a perfect cad to his wife and children, he's always behaving like a perfect cad; the way he treats the people who've helped him—and sometimes he's been saved from starvation merely by the kindness of his friends—is simply beastly. He just happens to be a great artist."

Philip pondered over the man who was willing to sacrifice everything, comfort, home, money, love, honour, duty, for the sake of getting on to canvas with paint the emotion which the world gave him. It was magnificent, and yet his courage failed him.

Thinking of Cronshaw recalled to him the fact that he had not seen him for a week, and so, when Clutton left him, he wandered along to the café in which he was certain to find the writer. During the first few months of his stay in Paris Philip had accepted as gospel all that Cronshaw said, but Philip had a practical outlook and he grew impatient with the theories which resulted in no action. Cronshaw's slim bundle of poetry did not seem a substantial result for a life which was sordid. Philip could not wrench out of his nature the instincts of the middle-class from which he came; and the penury, the hack work which Cronshaw did to keep body and soul together, the monotony of existence between the slovenly attic and the café table, jarred with his respectability. Cronshaw was astute enough to know that the young man disapproved of him, and he attacked his philistinism with an irony which was sometimes playful but often very keen.

"You're a tradesman," he told Philip, "you want to invest life in consols so that it shall bring you in a safe three per cent. I'm a spendthrift, I run through my capital. I shall spend my last penny with my last heartbeat."

The metaphor irritated Philip, because it assumed for the speaker a romantic attitude and cast a slur upon the position which Philip instinctively felt had more to say for it than he could think of at the moment.

But this evening Philip, undecided, wanted to talk about himself. Fortunately it was late already and Cronshaw's pile of saucers on the table, each indicating a drink, suggested that he was prepared to take an independent view of things in general.

"I wonder if you'd give me some advice," said Philip suddenly.

"You won't take it, will you?"

Philip shrugged his shoulders impatiently.

"I don't believe I shall ever do much good as a painter. I don't see any use in being second-rate. I'm thinking of chucking it."

"Why shouldn't you?"

Philip hesitated for an instant.

"I suppose I like the life."

A change came over Cronshaw's placid, round face. The corners of the mouth were suddenly depressed, the eyes sunk duily in their orbits; he seemed to become strangely bowed and old.

"This?" he cried, looking round the café in which they sat. His voice really trembled a little.

"If you can get out of it, do while there's time."

Philip stared at him with astonishment, but the sight of emotion always made him feel shy, and he dropped his eyes. He knew that he was looking upon the tragedy of failure. There was silence. Philip thought that Cronshaw was looking upon his own life; and perhaps he considered his youth with its bright hopes and the disappointments which wore out the radiancy; the wretched monotony of pleasure, and the black future. Philip's eyes rested on the little pile of saucers, and he knew that Cronshaw's were on them too.

LI

Two months passed.

It seemed to Philip, brooding over these matters, that in the true painters, writers, musicians, there was a power which drove them to such complete absorption in their work as to make it inevitable for them to subordinate life to art. Succumbing to an influence they never realised, they were merely dupes of the instinct that possessed them, and life slipped through their fingers unlived. But he had a feeling that life was to be lived rather than portrayed, and he wanted to search out the various experiences of it and wring from each moment all the emotion that it offered. He made up his mind at length to take a certain step and abide by the result, and, having made up his mind, he determined to take the step at once. Luckily enough the next morning was one of Foinet's days, and he resolved to ask him point-blank whether it was worth his while to go on with the study of art. He had never forgotten the master's brutal advice to Fanny Price. It had been sound. Philip could never get Fanny entirely out of his head. The studio seemed strange without her, and now and then the gesture of one of the women working there or the tone of a voice would give him a sudden start, reminding him of her: her presence was more noticeable now she was dead than it had ever been during her life; and he often dreamed of her at night, waking with a cry of terror. It was horrible to think of all the suffering she must have endured.

Philip knew that on the days Foinet came to the studio he lunched at a little restaurant in the Rue d'Odessa, and he hurried his own meal so that he could go and wait outside till the painter came out. Philip walked up and down the crowded street and at last saw Monsieur Foinet walking, with bent head, towards him; Philip was very nervous, but he forced himself to go up to him.

"*Pardon, monsieur,* I should like to speak to you for one moment."

Foinet gave him a rapid glance, recognised him, but did not smile a greeting.

"Speak," he said.

"I've been working here nearly two years now under you. I wanted to ask you to tell me frankly if you think it worth while for me to continue."

Philip's voice was trembling a little. Foinet walked on without looking up. Philip, watching his face, saw no trace of expression upon it.

"I don't understand."

"I'm very poor. If I have no talent I would sooner do something else."

"Don't you know if you have talent?"

"All my friends know they have talent, but I am aware some of them are mistaken."

Foinet's bitter mouth outlined the shadow of a smile, and he asked:

"Do you live near here?"

Philip told him where his studio was. Foinet turned round.

"Let us go there? You shall show me your work."

"Now?" cried Philip.

"Why not?"

Philip had nothing to say. He walked silently by the master's side. He felt horribly sick. It had never struck him that Foinet would wish to see his things there and then; he meant, so that he might have time to prepare himself, to ask him if he would mind coming at some future date or whether he might bring them to Foinet's studio. He was trembling with anxiety. In his heart he hoped that Foinet would look at his picture, and that rare smile would come into his face, and he would shake Philip's hand and say: "*Pas mal.* Go on, my lad. You have talent, real talent." Philip's heart swelled at the thought. It was such a relief, such a joy! Now he could go on with courage; and what did hardship matter, privation, and disappointment, if he arrived at last? He had worked very hard, it would be too cruel if all that industry were futile. And then with a start he remembered that he had heard Fanny Price say just that. They arrived at the house, and Philip was seized with fear. If he had dared he would have asked Foinet to go away. He did not want to know the truth. They went in and the *concierge* handed him a letter as they passed. He glanced at the envelope and recognised his uncle's handwriting. Foinet followed him up the stairs. Philip could think of nothing to say; Foinet was mute, and the silence got on his nerves. The professor sat down; and Philip without a word placed before him the picture which the Salon had rejected; Foinet nodded but did not speak; then Philip showed him the two portraits he had made of Ruth Chalice, two or three landscapes which he had painted at Moret, and a number of sketches.

"That's all," he said presently, with a nervous laugh.

Monsieur Foinet rolled himself a cigarette and lit it.

"You have very little private means?" he asked at last.

"Very little," answered Philip, with a sudden feeling of cold at his heart. "Not enough to live on."

"There is nothing so degrading as the constant anxiety about one's means of livelihood. I have nothing but contempt for the people who despise money. They are hypocrites or fools. Money is like a sixth sense without which you cannot make a complete use of the other five. Without an adequate income half the possibilities of life are shut off. The only thing to be careful about is that you do not pay more than a shilling for the shilling you earn. You will hear people say that poverty is the best spur to the artist. They have never felt the iron of it in their flesh. They do not know how mean it makes you. It exposes you to endless humiliation, it cuts your wings, it eats into your soul like a cancer. It is not wealth one asks for, but just enough to preserve one's dignity, to work unhampered, to be generous, frank, and independent. I pity with all my heart the artist, whether he writes or paints, who is entirely dependent for subsistence upon his art."

Philip quietly put away the various things which he had shown.

"I'm afraid that sounds as if you didn't think I had much chance."

Monsieur Foinet slightly shrugged his shoulders.

"You have a certain manual dexterity. With hard work and perseverance there is no reason why you should not become a careful, not incompetent painter. You would find hundreds who painted worse than you, hundreds who painted as well. I see no talent in anything you have shown me. I see industry and intelligence. You will never be anything but mediocre."

Philip obliged himself to answer quite steadily.

"I'm very grateful to you for having taken so much trouble. I can't thank you enough."

Monsieur Foinet got up and made as if to go, but he changed his mind and, stopping, put his hand on Philip's shoulder.

"But if you were to ask me my advice, I should say: take your courage in both hands and try your luck at something else. It sounds very hard, but let me tell you this: I would give all I have in the world if someone had given me that advice when I was your age and I had taken it."

Philip looked up at him with surprise. The master forced his lips into a smile, but his eyes remained grave and sad.

"It is cruel to discover one's mediocrity only when it is too late. It does not improve the temper."

He gave a little laugh as he said the last words and quickly walked out of the room.

Philip mechanically took up the letter from his uncle. The sight of his handwriting made him anxious, for it was his aunt who always wrote to him. She had been ill for the last three months, and he had offered to go over to England and see her; but she, fearing it would interfere with his work, had refused. She did not want him to put himself to inconvenience; she said she would wait till August and then she hoped he would come and stay at the vicarage for two or three weeks. If by any chance she grew worse she would let him know, since she did not wish to die without seeing him again. If his uncle wrote to him it must be because she was too ill to hold a pen. Philip opened the letter. It ran as follows:

My dear Philip,

I regret to inform you that your dear Aunt departed this life early this morning. She died very suddenly, but quite peacefully. The change for the worse was so rapid that we had no time to send for you. She was fully prepared for the end and entered into rest with the complete assurance of a blessed resurrection and with resignation to the divine will of our blessed Lord Jesus Christ. Your Aunt would have liked you to be present at the funeral so I trust you will come as soon as you can. There is naturally a great deal of work thrown upon my shoulders and I am very much upset. I trust that you will be able to do everything for me.

Your affectionate uncle,

William Carey

LII

Next day Philip arrived at Blackstable. Since the death of his mother he had never lost anyone closely connected with him; his aunt's death shocked him and filled him also with a curious fear; he felt for the first time his own mortality. He could not realise what life would be for his uncle without the constant companionship of the woman who had loved and tended him for forty years. He expected to find him broken down with hopeless grief. He dreaded the first meeting; he knew that he could say nothing which would be of use. He rehearsed to himself a number of apposite speeches.

He entered the vicarage by the side-door and went into the dining-room. Uncle William was reading the paper.

"Your train was late," he said, looking up.

Philip was prepared to give way to his emotion, but the matter-of-fact reception startled him. His uncle, subdued but calm, handed him the paper.

"There's a very nice little paragraph about her in *The Blackstable Times*," he said.

Philip read it mechanically.

"Would you like to come up and see her?"

Philip nodded and together they walked upstairs. Aunt Louisa was lying in the middle of the large bed, with flowers all round her.

"Would you like to say a short prayer?" said the Vicar.

He sank on his knees, and because it was expected of him Philip followed his example. He looked at the little shrivelled face. He was only conscious of one emotion: what a wasted life! In a minute Mr. Carey gave a cough, and stood up. He pointed to a wreath at the foot of the bed.

"That's from the Squire," he said. He spoke in a low voice as though he were in church, but one felt that, as a clergyman, he found himself quite at home. "I expect tea is ready."

They went down again to the dining-room. The drawn blinds gave a lugubrious aspect. The Vicar sat at the end of the table at which his wife had always sat and poured out the tea with ceremony. Philip could not help feeling that neither of them should have been able to eat anything, but when he saw that his

uncle's appetite was unimpaired he fell to with his usual heartiness. They did not speak for a while. Philip set himself to eat an excellent cake with the air of grief which he felt was decent.

"Things have changed a great deal since I was a curate," said the Vicar presently. "In my young days the mourners used always to be given a pair of black gloves and a piece of black silk for their hats. Poor Louisa used to make the silk into dresses. She always said that twelve funerals gave her a new dress."

Then he told Philip who had sent wreaths; there were twenty-four of them already; when Mrs. Rawlingson, wife of the Vicar at Ferne, had died she had had thirty-two; but probably a good many more would come the next day; the funeral would start at eleven o'clock from the vicarage, and they should beat Mrs. Rawlingson easily. Louisa never liked Mrs. Rawlingson.

"I shall take the funeral myself. I promised Louisa I would never let anyone else bury her."

Philip looked at his uncle with disapproval when he took a second piece of cake. Under the circumstances he could not help thinking it greedy.

"Mary Ann certainly makes capital cakes. I'm afraid no one else will make such good ones."

"She's not going?" cried Philip, with astonishment.

Mary Ann had been at the vicarage ever since he could remember. She never forgot his birthday, but made a point always of sending him a trifle, absurd but touching. He had a real affection for her.

"Yes," answered Mr. Carey. "I didn't think it would do to have a single woman in the house."

"But, good heavens, she must be over forty."

"Yes, I think she is. But she's been rather troublesome lately, she's been inclined to take too much on herself, and I thought this was a very good opportunity to give her notice."

"It's certainly one which isn't likely to recur," said Philip.

He took out a cigarette, but his uncle prevented him from lighting it.

"Not till after the funeral, Philip," he said gently.

"All right," said Philip.

"It wouldn't be quite respectful to smoke in the house so long as your poor Aunt Louisa is upstairs."

Josiah Graves, churchwarden and manager of the bank, came back to dinner at the vicarage after the funeral. The blinds had

been drawn up, and Philip, against his will, felt a curious sensation of relief. The body in the house had made him uncomfortable: in life the poor woman had been all that was kind and gentle; and yet, when she lay upstairs in her bed-room, cold and stark, it seemed as though she cast upon the survivors a baleful influence. The thought horrified Philip.

He found himself alone for a minute or two in the dining-room with the churchwarden.

"I hope you'll be able to stay with your uncle a while," he said. "I don't think he ought to be left alone just yet."

"I haven't made any plans," answered Philip. "If he wants me I shall be very pleased to stay."

By way of cheering the bereaved husband the churchwarden during dinner talked of a recent fire at Blackstable which had partly destroyed the Wesleyan chapel.

"I hear they weren't insured," he said, with a little smile.

"That won't make any difference," said the Vicar. "They'll get as much money as they want to rebuild. Chapel people are always ready to give money."

"I see that Holden sent a wreath."

Holden was the dissenting minister, and, though for Christ's sake who died for both of them, Mr. Carey nodded to him in the street, he did not speak to him.

"I think it was very pushing," he remarked. "There were forty-one wreaths. Yours was beautiful. Philip and I admired it very much."

"Don't mention it," said the banker.

He had noticed with satisfaction that it was larger than any one's else. It had looked very well. They began to discuss the people who attended the funeral. Shops had been closed for it, and the churchwarden took out of his pocket the notice which had been printed: *Owing to the funeral of Mrs. Carey this establishment will not be opened till one o'clock.*

"It was my idea," he said.

"I think it was very nice of them to close," said the Vicar. "Poor Louisa would have appreciated that."

Philip ate his dinner. Mary Ann had treated the day as Sunday, and they had roast chicken and a gooseberry tart.

"I suppose you haven't thought about a tombstone yet?" said the churchwarden.

"Yes, I have. I thought of a plain stone cross. Louisa was always against ostentation."

"I don't think one can do much better than a cross. If you're

thinking of a text, what do you say to: *With Christ, which is far better"?*

The Vicar pursed his lips. It was just like Bismarck to try and settle everything himself. He did not like that text; it seemed to cast an aspersion on himself.

"I don't think I should put that. I much prefer: *The Lord has given and the Lord has taken away.*"

"Oh, do you? That always seems to me a little indifferent."

The Vicar answered with some acidity, and Mr. Graves replied in a tone which the widower thought too authoritative for the occasion. Things were going rather far if he could not choose his own text for his own wife's tombstone. There was a pause, and then the conversation drifted to parish matters. Philip went into the garden to smoke his pipe. He sat on a bench, and suddenly began to laugh hysterically.

A few days later his uncle expressed the hope that he would spend the next few weeks at Blackstable.

"Yes, that will suit me very well," said Philip.

"I suppose it'll do if you go back to Paris in September."

Philip did not reply. He had thought much of what Foinet said to him, but he was still so undecided that he did not wish to speak of the future. There would be something fine in giving up art because he was convinced that he could not excel; but unfortunately it would seem so only to himself: to others it would be an admission of defeat, and he did not want to confess that he was beaten. He was an obstinate fellow, and the suspicion that his talent did not lie in one direction made him inclined to force circumstances and aim notwithstanding precisely in that direction. He could not bear that his friends should laugh at him. This might have prevented him from ever taking the definite step of abandoning the study of painting, but the different environment made him on a sudden see things differently. Like many another he discovered that crossing the Channel makes things which had seemed important singularly futile. The life which had been so charming that he could not bear to leave it now seemed inept; he was seized with a distaste for the cafés, the restaurants with their ill-cooked food, the shabby way in which they all lived. He did not care any more what his friends thought about him: Cronshaw with his rhetoric, Mrs. Otter with her respectability, Ruth Chalice with her affectations, Lawson and Clutton with their quarrels; he felt a revulsion from them all. He wrote to Lawson and asked him to send over all his belongings. A

week later they arrived. When he unpacked his canvases he found himself able to examine his work without emotion. He noticed the fact with interest. His uncle was anxious to see his pictures. Though he had so greatly disapproved of Philip's desire to go to Paris, he accepted the situation now with equanimity. He was interested in the life of students and constantly put Philip questions about it. He was in fact a little proud of him because he was a painter, and when people were present made attempts to draw him out. He looked eagerly at the studies of models which Philip showed him. Philip set before him his portrait of Miguel Ajuria.

"Why did you paint him?" asked Mr. Carey.

"Oh, I wanted a model, and his head interested me."

"As you haven't got anything to do here I wonder you don't paint me."

"It would bore you to sit."

"I think I should like it."

"We must see about it."

Philip was amused at his uncle's vanity. It was clear that he was dying to have his portrait painted. To get something for nothing was a chance not to be missed. For two or three days he threw out little hints. He reproached Philip for laziness, asked him when he was going to start work, and finally began telling everyone he met that Philip was going to paint him. At last there came a rainy day, and after breakfast Mr. Carey said to Philip:

"Now, what d'you say to starting on my portrait this morning?" Philip put down the book he was reading and leaned back in his chair.

"I've given up painting," he said.

"Why?" asked his uncle in astonishment.

"I don't think there's much object in being a second-rate painter, and I came to the conclusion that I should never be anything else."

"You surprise me. Before you went to Paris you were quite certain that you were a genius."

"I was mistaken," said Philip.

"I should have thought now you'd taken up a profession you'd have the pride to stick to it. It seems to me that what you lack is perseverance."

Philip was a little annoyed that his uncle did not even see how truly heroic his determination was.

"'A rolling stone gathers no moss,'" proceeded the clergyman.

Philip hated that proverb above all, and it seemed to him perfectly meaningless. His uncle had repeated it often during the arguments which had preceded his departure from business. Apparently it recalled that occasion to his guardian.

"You're no longer a boy, you know; you must begin to think of settling down. First you insist on becoming a chartered accountant, and then you get tired of that and you want to become a painter. And now if you please you change your mind again. It points to . . ."

He hesitated for a moment to consider what defects of character exactly it indicated, and Philip finished the sentence.

"Irresolution, incompetence, want of foresight, and lack of determination."

The Vicar looked up at his nephew quickly to see whether he was laughing at him. Philip's face was serious, but there was a twinkle in his eyes which irritated him. Philip should really be getting more serious. He felt it right to give him a rap over the knuckles.

"Your money matters have nothing to do with me now. You're your own master; but I think you should remember that your money won't last for ever, and the unlucky deformity you have doesn't exactly make it easier for you to earn your living."

Philip knew by now that whenever anyone was angry with him his first thought was to say something about his club-foot. His estimate of the human race was determined by the fact that scarcely anyone failed to resist the temptation. But he had trained himself not to show any sign that the reminder wounded him. He had even acquired control over the blushing which in his boyhood had been one of his torments.

"As you justly remark," he answered, "my money matters have nothing to do with you and I am my own master."

"At all events you will do me the justice to acknowledge that I was justified in my opposition when you made up your mind to become an art-student."

"I don't know so much about that. I daresay one profits more by the mistakes one makes off one's own bat than by doing the right thing on somebody's else advice. I've had my fling, and I don't mind settling down now."

"What at?"

Philip was not prepared for the question, since in fact he had not made up his mind. He had thought of a dozen callings.

"The most suitable thing you could do is to enter your father's profession and become a doctor."

"Oddly enough that is precisely what I intend."

He had thought of doctoring among other things, chiefly because it was an occupation which seemed to give a good deal of personal freedom, and his experience of life in an office had made him determine never to have anything more to do with one; his answer to the Vicar slipped out almost unawares, because it was in the nature of a repartee. It amused him to make up his mind in that accidental way, and he resolved then and there to enter his father's old hospital in the autumn.

"Then your two years in Paris may be regarded as so much wasted time?"

"I don't know about that. I had a very jolly two years, and I learned one or two useful things."

"What?"

Philip reflected for an instant, and his answer was not devoid of a gentle desire to annoy.

"I learned to look at hands, which I'd never looked at before. And instead of just looking at houses and trees I learned to look at houses and trees against the sky. And I learned also that shadows are not black but coloured."

"I suppose you think you're very clever. I think your flippancy is quite inane."

LIII

Taking the paper with him Mr. Carey retired to his study. Philip changed his chair for that in which his uncle had been sitting (it was the only comfortable one in the room), and looked out of the window at the pouring rain. Even in that sad weather there was something restful about the green fields that stretched to the horizon. There was an intimate charm in the landscape which he did not remember ever to have noticed before. Two years in France had opened his eyes to the beauty of his own countryside.

He thought with a smile of his uncle's remark. It was lucky that the turn of his mind tended to flippancy. He had begun to realise what a great loss he had sustained in the death of his father and mother. That was one of the differences in his life which prevented him from seeing things in the same way as other people. The love of parents for their children is the only emotion which is quite disinterested. Among strangers he had grown up as best he could, but he had seldom been used with patience or forbearance. He prided himself on his self-control. It had been whipped into him by the mockery of his fellows. Then they called him cynical and callous. He had acquired calmness of demeanour and under most circumstances an unruffled exterior, so that now he could not show his feelings. People told him he was unemotional; but he knew that he was at the mercy of his emotions: an accidental kindness touched him so much that sometimes he did not venture to speak in order not to betray the unsteadiness of his voice. He remembered the bitterness of his life at school, the humiliation which he had endured, the banter which had made him morbidly afraid of making himself ridiculous; and he remembered the loneliness he had felt since, faced with the world, the disillusion and the disappointment caused by the difference between what it promised to his active imagination and what it gave. But notwithstanding he was able to look at himself from the outside and smile with amusement.

"By Jove, if I weren't flippant, I should hang myself," he thought cheerfully.

His mind went back to the answer he had given his uncle when he asked him what he had learnt in Paris. He had learnt a

good deal more than he told him. A conversation with Cronshaw had stuck in his memory, and one phrase he had used, a commonplace one enough, had set his brain working.

"My dear fellow," Cronshaw said, "there's no such thing as abstract morality."

When Philip ceased to believe in Christianity he felt that a great weight was taken from his shoulders; casting off the responsibility which weighed down every action, when every action was infinitely important for the welfare of his immortal soul, he experienced a vivid sense of liberty. But he knew now that this was an illusion. When he put away the religion in which he had been brought up, he had kept unimpaired the morality which was part and parcel of it. He made up his mind therefore to think things out for himself. He determined to be swayed by no prejudices. He swept away the virtues and the vices, the established laws of good and evil, with the idea of finding out the rules of life for himself. He did not know whether rules were necessary at all. That was one of the things he wanted to discover. Clearly much that seemed valid seemed so only because he had been taught it from his earliest youth. He had read a number of books, but they did not help him much, for they were based on the morality of Christianity; and even the writers who emphasised the fact that they did not believe in it were never satisfied till they had framed a system of ethics in accordance with that of the Sermon on the Mount. It seemed hardly worth while to read a long volume in order to learn that you ought to behave exactly like everybody else. Philip wanted to find out how he ought to behave, and he thought he could prevent himself from being influenced by the opinions that surrounded him. But meanwhile he had to go on living, and, until he formed a theory of conduct, he made himself a provisional rule.

"Follow your inclinations with due regard to the policeman round the corner."

He thought the best thing he had gained in Paris was a complete liberty of spirit, and he felt himself at last absolutely free. In a desultory way he had read a good deal of philosophy, and he looked forward with delight to the leisure of the next few months. He began to read at haphazard. He entered upon each system with a little thrill of excitement, expecting to find in each some guide by which he could rule his conduct; he felt himself like a traveller in unknown countries and as he pushed forward the enterprise fascinated him; he read emotionally, as other men read pure literature, and his heart leaped as he discovered in noble words

what himself had obscurely felt. His mind was concrete and moved with difficulty in regions of the abstract; but, even when he could not follow the reasoning, it gave him a curious pleasure to follow the tortuosities of thoughts that threaded their nimble way on the edge of the incomprehensible. Sometimes great philosophers seemed to have nothing to say to him, but at others he recognised a mind with which he felt himself at home. He was like the explorer in Central Africa who comes suddenly upon wide uplands, with great trees in them and stretches of meadow, so that he might fancy himself in an English park. He delighted in the robust common sense of Thomas Hobbes; Spinoza filled him with awe, he had never before come in contact with a mind so noble, so unapproachable and austere; it reminded him of that statue by Rodin, *L'Âge d'Airain,* which he passionately admired; and then there was Hume: the scepticism of that charming philosopher touched a kindred note in Philip; and, revelling in the lucid style which seemed able to put complicated thought into simple words, musical and measured, he read as he might have read a novel, a smile of pleasure on his lips. But in none could he find exactly what he wanted. He had read somewhere that every man was born a Platonist, an Aristotelian, a Stoic, or an Epicurean; and the history of George Henry Lewes (besides telling you that philosophy was all moonshine) was there to show that the thought of each philosopher was inseparably connected with the man he was. When you knew that you could guess to a great extent the philosophy he wrote. It looked as though you did not act in a certain way because you thought in a certain way, but rather that you thought in a certain way because you were made in a certain way. Truth had nothing to do with it. There was no such thing as truth. Each man was his own philosopher, and the elaborate systems which the great men of the past had composed were only valid for the writers.

The thing then was to discover what one was and one's system of philosophy would devise itself. It seemed to Philip that there were three things to find out: man's relation to the world he lives in, man's relation with the men among whom he lives, and finally man's relation to himself. He made an elaborate plan of study.

The advantage of living abroad is that, coming in contact with the manners and customs of the people among whom you live, you observe them from the outside and see that they have not the necessity which those who practise them believe. You cannot fail to discover that the beliefs which to you are self-evident to the foreigner are absurd. The year in Germany, the long stay in

Paris, had prepared Philip to receive the sceptical teaching which came to him now with such a feeling of relief. He saw that nothing was good and nothing was evil; things were merely adapted to an end. He read *The Origin of Species.* It seemed to offer an explanation of much that troubled him. He was like an explorer now who has reasoned that certain natural features must present themselves, and, beating up a broad river, finds here the tributary that he expected, there the fertile, populated plains, and further on the mountains. When some great discovery is made the world is surprised afterwards that it was not accepted at once, and even on those who acknowledge its truth the effect is unimportant. The first readers of *The Origin of Species* accepted it with their reason; but their emotions, which are the ground of conduct, were untouched. Philip was born a generation after this great book was published, and much that horrified its contemporaries had passed into the feeling of the time, so that he was able to accept it with a joyful heart. He was intensely moved by the grandeur of the struggle for life, and the ethical rule which it suggested seemed to fit in with his predispositions. He said to himself that might was right. Society stood on one side, an organism with its own laws of growth and self-preservation, while the individual stood on the other. The actions which were to the advantage of society it termed virtuous and those which were not it called vicious. Good and evil meant nothing more than that. Sin was a prejudice from which the free man should rid himself. Society had three arms in its contest with the individual, laws, public opinion, and conscience: the first two could be met by guile, guile is the only weapon of the weak against the strong: common opinion put the matter well when it stated that sin consisted in being found out; but conscience was the traitor within the gates; it fought in each heart the battle of society, and caused the individual to throw himself, a wanton sacrifice, to the prosperity of his enemy. For it was clear that the two were irreconcilable, the state and the individual conscious of himself. *That* uses the individual for its own ends, trampling upon him if he thwarts it, rewarding him with medals, pensions, honours, when he serves it faithfully; *this,* strong only in his independence, threads his way through the state, for convenience' sake, paying in money or service for certain benefits, but with no sense of obligation; and, indifferent to the rewards, asks only to be left alone. He is the independent traveller, who uses Cook's tickets because they save trouble, but looks with good-humoured contempt on the personally conducted parties. The free man can do no

wrong. He does everything he likes—if he can. His power is the only measure of his morality. He recognises the laws of the state and he can break them without sense of sin, but if he is punished he accepts the punishment without rancour. Society has the power.

But if for the individual there was no right and no wrong, then it seemed to Philip that conscience lost its power. It was with a cry of triumph that he seized the knave and flung him from his breast. But he was no nearer to the meaning of life than he had been before. Why the world was there and what men had come into existence for at all was as inexplicable as ever. Surely there must be some reason. He thought of Cronshaw's parable of the Persian Carpet. He offered it as a solution of the riddle, and mysteriously he stated that it was no answer at all unless you found it out for yourself.

"I wonder what the devil he meant," Philip smiled.

And so, on the last day of September, eager to put into practice all these new theories of life, Philip, with sixteen hundred pounds and his club-foot, set out for the second time to London to make his third start in life.

LIV

The examination Philip had passed before he was articled to a chartered accountant was sufficient qualification for him to enter a medical school. He chose St. Luke's because his father had been a student there, and before the end of the summer session had gone up to London for a day in order to see the secretary. He got a list of rooms from him, and took lodgings in a dingy house which had the advantage of being within two minutes' walk of the hospital.

"You'll have to arrange about a part to dissect," the secretary told him. "You'd better start on a leg; they generally do; they seem to think it easier."

Philip found that his first lecture was in anatomy, at eleven, and about half past ten he limped across the road, and a little nervously made his way to the Medical School. Just inside the door a number of notices were pinned up, lists of lectures, football fixtures, and the like; and these he looked at idly, trying to seem at his ease. Young men and boys dribbled in and looked for letters in the rack, chatted with one another, and passed downstairs to the basement, in which was the students' reading-room. Philip saw several fellows with a desultory, timid look dawdling around, and surmised that, like himself, they were there for the first time. When he had exhausted the notices he saw a glass door which led into what was apparently a museum, and having still twenty minutes to spare he walked in. It was a collection of pathological specimens. Presently a boy of about eighteen came up to him.

"I say, are you first year?" he said.

"Yes," answered Philip.

"Where's the lecture room, d'you know? It's getting on for eleven."

"We'd better try to find it."

They walked out of the museum into a long, dark corridor, with the walls painted in two shades of red, and other youths walking along suggested the way to them. They came to a door marked Anatomy Theatre. Philip found that there were a good many people already there. The seats were arranged in tiers, and just as Philip entered an attendant came in, put a glass of water on

the table in the well of the lecture-room and then brought in a pelvis and two thigh-bones, right and left. More men entered and took their seats and by eleven the theatre was fairly full. There were about sixty students. For the most part they were a good deal younger than Philip, smooth-faced boys of eighteen, but there were a few who were older than he: he noticed one tall man, with a fierce red moustache, who might have been thirty; another little fellow with black hair, only a year or two younger; and there was one man with spectacles and a beard which was quite gray.

The lecturer came in, Mr. Cameron, a handsome man with white hair and clean-cut features. He called out the long list of names. Then he made a little speech. He spoke in a pleasant voice, with well-chosen words, and he seemed to take a discreet pleasure in their careful arrangement. He suggested one or two books which they might buy and advised the purchase of a skeleton. He spoke of anatomy with enthusiasm: it was essential to the study of Surgery; a knowledge of it added to the appreciation of art. Philip pricked up his ears. He heard later that Mr. Cameron lectured also to the students at the Royal Academy. He had lived many years in Japan, with a post at the University of Tokio, and he flattered himself on his appreciation of the beautiful.

"You will have to learn many tedious things," he finished, with an indulgent smile, "which you will forget the moment you have passed your final examination, but in anatomy it is better to have learned and lost than never to have learned at all."

He took up the pelvis which was lying on the table and began to describe it. He spoke well and clearly.

At the end of the lecture the boy who had spoken to Philip in the pathological museum and sat next to him in the theatre suggested that they should go to the dissecting-room. Philip and he walked along the corridor again, and an attendant told them where it was. As soon as they entered Philip understood what the acrid smell was which he had noticed in the passage. He lit a pipe. The attendant gave a short laugh.

"You'll soon get used to the smell. I don't notice it myself."

He asked Philip's name and looked at a list on the board.

"You've got a leg—number four."

Philip saw that another name was bracketed with his own.

"What's the meaning of that?" he asked.

"We're very short of bodies just now. We've had to put two on each part."

The dissecting-room was a large apartment painted like the corridors, the upper part a rich salmon and the dado a dark terra-

cotta. At regular intervals down the long sides of the room, at right angles with the wall, were iron slabs, grooved like meat-dishes; and on each lay a body. Most of them were men. They were very dark from the preservative in which they had been kept, and the skin had almost the look of leather. They were extremely emaciated. The attendant took Philip up to one of the slabs. A youth was standing by it.

"Is your name Carey?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Oh, then we've got this leg together. It's lucky it's a man, isn't it?"

"Why?" asked Philip.

"They generally always like a male better," said the attendant. "A female's liable to have a lot of fat about her."

Philip looked at the body. The arms and legs were so thin that there was no shape in them, and the ribs stood out so that the skin over them was tense. A man of about forty-five with a thin, gray beard, and on his skull scanty, colourless hair: the eyes were closed and the lower jaw sunken. Philip could not feel that this had ever been a man, and yet in the row of them there was something terrible and ghastly.

"I thought I'd start at two," said the young man who was dissecting with Philip.

"All right, I'll be here then."

He had bought the day before the case of instruments which was needful, and now he was given a locker. He looked at the boy who had accompanied him into the dissecting-room and saw that he was white.

"Make you feel rotten?" Philip asked him.

"I've never seen anyone dead before."

They walked along the corridor till they came to the entrance of the school. Philip remembered Fanny Price. She was the first dead person he had ever seen, and he remembered how strangely it had affected him. There was an immeasurable distance between the quick and the dead: they did not seem to belong to the same species; and it was strange to think that but a little while before they had spoken and moved and eaten and laughed. There was something horrible about the dead, and you could imagine that they might cast an evil influence on the living.

"What d'you say to having something to eat?" said his new friend to Philip.

They went down into the basement, where there was a dark room fitted up as a restaurant, and here the students were able to

get the same sort of fare as they might have at an aërated bread shop. While they ate (Philip had a scone and butter and a cup of chocolate), he discovered that his companion was called Dunsford. He was a fresh-complexioned lad, with pleasant blue eyes and curly, dark hair, large-limbed, slow of speech and movement. He had just come from Clifton.

"Are you taking the Conjoint?" he asked Philip.

"Yes, I want to get qualified as soon as I can."

"I'm taking it too, but I shall take the F. R. C. S. afterwards. I'm going in for surgery."

Most of the students took the curriculum of the Conjoint Board of the College of Surgeons and the College of Physicians; but the more ambitious or the more industrious added to this the longer studies which led to a degree from the University of London. When Philip went to St. Luke's changes had recently been made in the regulations, and the course took five years instead of four as it had done for those who registered before the autumn of 1892. Dunsford was well up in his plans and told Philip the usual course of events. The "first conjoint" examination consisted of Biology, Anatomy, and Chemistry; but it could be taken in sections, and most fellows took their biology three months after entering the school. This science had been recently added to the list of subjects upon which the student was obliged to inform himself, but the amount of knowledge required was very small.

When Philip went back to the dissecting-room, he was a few minutes late, since he had forgotten to buy the loose sleeves which they wore to protect their shirts, and he found a number of men already working. His partner had started on the minute and was busy dissecting out cutaneous nerves. Two others were engaged on the second leg, and more were occupied with the arms.

"You don't mind my having started?"

"That's all right, fire away," said Philip.

He took the book, open at a diagram of the dissected part, and looked at what they had to find.

"You're rather a dab at this," said Philip.

"Oh, I've done a good deal of dissecting before, animals, you know, for the Pre Sci."

There was a certain amount of conversation over the dissecting-table, partly about the work, partly about the prospects of the football season, the demonstrators, and the lectures. Philip felt himself a great deal older than the others. They were raw schoolboys. But age is a matter of knowledge rather than of years; and Newson, the active young man who was dissecting with him, was

very much at home with his subject. He was perhaps not sorry to show off, and he explained very fully to Philip what he was about. Philip, notwithstanding his hidden stores of wisdom, listened meekly. Then Philip took up the scalpel and the tweezers and began working while the other looked on.

"Ripping to have him so thin," said Newson, wiping his hands. "The blighter can't have had anything to eat for a month."

"I wonder what he died of," murmured Philip.

"Oh, I don't know, any old thing, starvation chiefly, I suppose. . . . I say, look out, don't cut that artery."

"It's all very fine to say, don't cut that artery," remarked one of the men working on the opposite leg. "Silly old fool's got an artery in the wrong place."

"Arteries always are in the wrong place," said Newson. "The normal's the one thing you practically never get. That's why it's called the normal."

"Don't say things like that," said Philip, "or I shall cut myself."

"If you cut yourself," answered Newson, full of information, "wash it at once with antiseptic. It's the one thing you've got to be careful about. There was a chap here last year who gave himself only a prick, and he didn't bother about it, and he got septicæmia."

"Did he get all right?"

"Oh no, he died in a week. I went and had a look at him in the P. M. room."

Philip's back ached by the time it was proper to have tea, and his luncheon had been so light that he was quite ready for it. His hands smelt of that peculiar odour which he had first noticed that morning in the corridor. He thought his muffin tasted of it too.

"Oh, you'll get used to that," said Newson. "When you don't have the good old dissecting-room stink about, you feel quite lonely."

"I'm not going to let it spoil my appetite," said Philip, as he followed up the muffin with a piece of cake.

LV

Philip's ideas of the life of medical students, like those of the public at large, were founded on the pictures which Charles Dickens drew in the middle of the nineteenth century. He soon discovered that Bob Sawyer, if he ever existed, was no longer at all like the medical student of the present.

It is a mixed lot which enters upon the medical profession, and naturally there are some who are lazy and reckless. They think it is an easy life, idle away a couple of years; and then, because their funds come to an end or because angry parents refuse any longer to support them, drift away from the hospital. Others find the examinations too hard for them; one failure after another robs them of their nerve; and, panic-stricken, they forget as soon as they come into the forbidding buildings of the Conjoint Board the knowledge which before they had so pat. They remain year after year, objects of good-humoured scorn to younger men: some of them crawl through the examination of the Apothecaries Hall; others become non-qualified assistants, a precarious position in which they are at the mercy of their employer; their lot is poverty, drunkenness, and Heaven only knows their end. But for the most part medical students are industrious young men of the middle-class with a sufficient allowance to live in the respectable fashion they have been used to; many are the sons of doctors who have already something of the professional manner; their career is mapped out: as soon as they are qualified they propose to apply for a hospital appointment, after holding which (and perhaps a trip to the Far East as a ship's doctor), they will join their father and spend the rest of their days in a country practice. One or two are marked out as exceptionally brilliant: they will take the various prizes and scholarships which are open each year to the deserving, get one appointment after another at the hospital, go on the staff, take a consulting-room in Harley Street, and, specialising in one subject or another, become prosperous, eminent, and titled.

The medical profession is the only one which a man may enter at any age with some chance of making a living. Among the men of Philip's year were three or four who were past their first youth: one had been in the Navy, from which according to report

he had been dismissed for drunkenness; he was a man of thirty, with a red face, a brusque manner, and a loud voice. Another was a married man with two children, who had lost money through a defaulting solicitor; he had a bowed look as if the world were too much for him; he went about his work silently, and it was plain that he found it difficult at his age to commit facts to memory. His mind worked slowly. His effort at application was painful to see.

Philip made himself at home in his tiny rooms. He arranged his books and hung on the walls such pictures and sketches as he possessed. Above him, on the drawing-room floor, lived a fifth-year man called Griffiths; but Philip saw little of him, partly because he was occupied chiefly in the wards and partly because he had been to Oxford. Such of the students as had been to a university kept a good deal together: they used a variety of means natural to the young in order to impress upon the less fortunate a proper sense of their inferiority; the rest of the students found their Olympian serenity rather hard to bear. Griffiths was a tall fellow, with a quantity of curly red hair and blue eyes, a white skin and a very red mouth; he was one of those fortunate people whom everybody liked, for he had high spirits and a constant gaiety. He strummed a little on the piano and sang comic songs with gusto; and evening after evening, while Philip was reading in his solitary room, he heard the shouts and the uproarious laughter of Griffiths' friends above him. He thought of those delightful evenings in Paris when they would sit in the studio, Lawson and he, Flanagan and Clutton, and talk of art and morals, the love-affairs of the present, and the fame of the future. He felt sick at heart. He found that it was easy to make a heroic gesture, but hard to abide by its results. The worst of it was that the work seemed to him very tedious. He had got out of the habit of being asked questions by demonstrators. His attention wandered at lectures. Anatomy was a dreary science, a mere matter of learning by heart an enormous number of facts; dissection bored him; he did not see the use of dissecting out laboriously nerves and arteries when with much less trouble you could see in the diagrams of a book or in the specimens of the pathological museum exactly where they were.

He made friends by chance, but not intimate friends, for he seemed to have nothing in particular to say to his companions. When he tried to interest himself in their concerns, he felt that they found him patronising. He was not of those who can talk of what moves them without caring whether it bores or not the

people they talk to. One man, hearing that he had studied art in Paris, and fancying himself on his taste, tried to discuss art with him; but Philip was impatient of views which did not agree with his own; and, finding quickly that the other's ideas were conventional, grew monosyllabic. Philip desired popularity but could bring himself to make no advances to others. A fear of rebuff prevented him from affability, and he concealed his shyness, which was still intense, under a frigid taciturnity. He was going through the same experience as he had done at school, but here the freedom of the medical students' life made it possible for him to live a good deal by himself.

It was through no effort of his that he became friendly with Dunsford, the fresh-complexioned, heavy lad whose acquaintance he had made at the beginning of the session. Dunsford attached himself to Philip merely because he was the first person he had known at St. Luke's. He had no friends in London, and on Saturday nights he and Philip got into the habit of going together to the pit of a music-hall or the gallery of a theatre. He was stupid, but he was good-humoured and never took offence; he always said the obvious thing, but when Philip laughed at him merely smiled. He had a very sweet smile. Though Philip made him his butt, he liked him; he was amused by his candour and delighted with his agreeable nature: Dunsford had the charm which himself was acutely conscious of not possessing.

They often went to have tea at a shop in Parliament Street, because Dunsford admired one of the young women who waited. Philip did not find anything attractive in her. She was tall and thin, with narrow hips and the chest of a boy.

"No one would look at her in Paris," said Philip scornfully.

"She's got a ripping face," said Dunsford.

"What *does* the face matter?"

She had the small regular features, the blue eyes, and the broad low brow, which the Victorian painters, Lord Leighton, Alma Tadema, and a hundred others, induced the world they lived in to accept as a type of Greek beauty. She seemed to have a great deal of hair: it was arranged with peculiar elaboration and done over the forehead in what she called an Alexandra fringe. She was very anæmic. Her thin lips were pale, and her skin was delicate, of a faint green colour, without a touch of red even in the cheeks. She had very good teeth. She took great pains to prevent her work from spoiling her hands, and they were small, thin, and white. She went about her duties with a bored look.

Dunsford, very shy with women, had never succeeded in getting into conversation with her; and he urged Philip to help him.

"All I want is a lead," he said, "and then I can manage for myself."

Philip, to please him, made one or two remarks, but she answered with monosyllables. She had taken their measure. They were boys, and she surmised they were students. She had no use for them. Dunsford noticed that a man with sandy hair and a bristly moustache, who looked like a German, was favoured with her attention whenever he came into the shop; and then it was only by calling her two or three times that they could induce her to take their order She used the clients whom she did not know with frigid insolence, and when she was talking to a friend was perfectly indifferent to the calls of the hurried. She had the art of treating women who desired refreshment with just that degree of impertinence which irritated them without affording them an opportunity of complaining to the management. One day Dunsford told him her name was Mildred. He had heard one of the other girls in the shop address her.

"What an odious name," said Philip.

"Why?" asked Dunsford. "I like it."

"It's so pretentious."

It chanced that on this day the German was not there, and, when she brought the tea, Philip, smiling, remarked:

"Your friend's not here today."

"I don't know what you mean," she said coldly.

"I was referring to the nobleman with the sandy moustache. Has he left you for another?"

"Some people would do better to mind their own business," she retorted.

She left them, and, since for a minute or two there was no one to attend to, sat down and looked at the evening paper which a customer had left behind him.

"You are a fool to put her back up," said Dunsford.

"I'm really quite indifferent to the attitude of her vertebræ," replied Philip.

But he was piqued. It irritated him that when he tried to be agreeable with a woman she should take offence. When he asked for the bill, he hazarded a remark which he meant to lead further.

"Are we no longer on speaking terms?" he smiled.

"I'm here to take orders and to wait on customers. I've got nothing to say to them, and I don't want them to say anything to me."

She put down the slip of paper on which she had marked the sum they had to pay, and walked back to the table at which she had been sitting. Philip flushed with anger.

"That's one in the eye for you, Carey," said Dunsford, when they got outside.

"Ill-mannered slut," said Philip. "I shan't go there again."

His influence with Dunsford was strong enough to get him to take their tea elsewhere, and Dunsford soon found another young woman to flirt with. But the snub which the waitress had inflicted on him rankled. If she had treated him with civility he would have been perfectly indifferent to her; but it was obvious that she disliked him rather than otherwise, and his pride was wounded. He could not suppress a desire to be even with her. He was impatient with himself because he had so petty a feeling, but three or four days' firmness, during which he would not go to the shop, did not help him to surmount it; and he came to the conclusion that it would be least trouble to see her. Having done so he would certainly cease to think of her. Pretexting an appointment one afternoon, for he was not a little ashamed of his weakness, he left Dunsford and went straight to the shop which he had vowed never again to enter. He saw the waitress the moment he came in and sat down at one of her tables. He expected her to make some reference to the fact that he had not been there for a week, but when she came up for his order she said nothing. He had heard her say to other customers:

"You're quite a stranger."

She gave no sign that she had ever seen him before. In order to see whether she had really forgotten him, when she brought his tea, he asked:

"Have you seen my friend tonight?"

"No, he's not been in here for some days."

He wanted to use this as the beginning of a conversation, but he was strangely nervous and could think of nothing to say. She gave him no opportunity, but at once went away. He had no chance of saying anything till he asked for his bill.

"Filthy weather, isn't it?" he said.

It was mortifying that he had been forced to prepare such a phrase as that. He could not make out why she filled him with such embarrassment.

"It don't make much difference to me what the weather is, having to be in here all day."

There was an insolence in her tone that peculiarly irritated

him. A sarcasm rose to his lips, but he forced himself to be silent.

"I wish to God she'd say something really cheeky," he raged to himself, "so that I could report her and get her sacked. It would serve her damned well right."

LVI

He could not get her out of his mind. He laughed angrily at his own foolishness: it was absurd to care what an anæmic little waitress said to him; but he was strangely humiliated. Though no one knew of the humiliation but Dunsford, and he had certainly forgotten, Philip felt that he could have no peace till he had wiped it out. He thought over what he had better do. He made up his mind that he would go to the shop every day; it was obvious that he had made a disagreeable impression on her, but he thought he had the wits to eradicate it; he would take care not to say anything at which the most susceptible person could be offended. All this he did, but it had no effect. When he went in and said good-evening she answered with the same words, but when once he omitted to say it in order to see whether she would say it first, she said nothing at all. He murmured in his heart an expression which though frequently applicable to members of the female sex is not often used of them in polite society; but with an unmoved face he ordered his tea. He made up his mind not to speak a word, and left the shop without his usual good-night. He promised himself that he would not go any more, but the next day at tea-time he grew restless. He tried to think of other things, but he had no command over his thoughts. At last he said desperately:

"After all there's no reason why I shouldn't go if I want to."

The struggle with himself had taken a long time, and it was getting on for seven when he entered the shop.

"I thought you weren't coming," the girl said to him, when he sat down.

His heart leaped in his bosom and he felt himself reddening. "I was detained. I couldn't come before."

"Cutting up people, I suppose?"

"Not so bad as that."

"You are a stoodent, aren't you?"

"Yes."

But that seemed to satisfy her curiosity. She went away and, since at that late hour there was nobody else at her tables, she immersed herself in a novelette. This was before the time of the sixpenny reprints. There was a regular supply of inexpensive

fiction written to order by poor hacks for the consumption of the illiterate. Philip was elated; she had addressed him of her own accord; he saw the time approaching when his turn would come and he would tell her exactly what he thought of her. It would be a great comfort to express the immensity of his contempt. He looked at her. It was true that her profile was beautiful; it was extraordinary how English girls of that class had so often a perfection of outline which took your breath away, but it was as cold as marble; and the faint green of her delicate skin gave an impression of unhealthiness. All the waitresses were dressed alike, in plain black dresses, with a white apron, cuffs, and a small cap. On a half sheet of paper that he had in his pocket Philip made a sketch of her as she sat leaning over her book (she outlined the words with her lips as she read), and left it on the table when he went away. It was an inspiration, for next day, when he came in, she smiled at him.

"I didn't know you could draw," she said.

"I was an art-student in Paris for two years."

"I showed that drawing you left be'ind you last night to the manageress and she *was* struck with it. Was it meant to be me?"

"It was," said Philip.

When she went for his tea, one of the other girls came up to him.

"I saw that picture you done of Miss Rogers. It was the very image of her," she said.

That was the first time he had heard her name, and when he wanted his bill he called her by it.

"I see you know my name," she said, when she came.

"Your friend mentioned it when she said something to me about that drawing."

"She wants you to do one of her. Don't you do it. If you once begin you'll have to go on, and they'll all be wanting you to do them." Then without a pause, with peculiar inconsequence, she said: "Where's that young fellow that used to come with you? Has he gone away?"

"Fancy your remembering him," said Philip.

"He was a nice-looking young fellow."

Philip felt quite a peculiar sensation in his heart. He did not know what it was. Dunsford had jolly curling hair, a fresh complexion, and a beautiful smile. Philip thought of these advantages with envy.

"Oh, he's in love," said he, with a little laugh.

Philip repeated every word of the conversation to himself as he limped home. She was quite friendly with him now. When

opportunity arose he would offer to make a more finished sketch of her, he was sure she would like that; her face was interesting, the profile was lovely, and there was something curiously fascinating about the chlorotic colour. He tried to think what it was like; at first he thought of pea soup; but, driving away that idea angrily, he thought of the petals of a yellow rosebud when you tore it to pieces before it had burst. He had no ill-feeling towards her now.

"She's not a bad sort," he murmured.

It was silly of him to take offence at what she had said; it was doubtless his own fault; she had not meant to make herself disagreeable: he ought to be accustomed by now to making at first sight a bad impression on people. He was flattered at the success of his drawing; she looked upon him with more interest now that she was aware of this small talent. He was restless next day. He thought of going to lunch at the tea-shop, but he was certain there would be many people there then, and Mildred would not be able to talk to him. He had managed before this to get out of having tea with Dunsford, and, punctually at half past four (he had looked at his watch a dozen times), he went into the shop.

Mildred had her back turned to him. She was sitting down, talking to the German whom Philip had seen there every day till a fortnight ago and since then had not seen at all. She was laughing at what he said. Philip thought she had a common laugh, and it made him shudder. He called her, but she took no notice; he called her again; then, growing angry, for he was impatient, he rapped the table loudly with his stick. She approached sulkily.

"How d'you do?" he said.

"You seem to be in a great hurry."

She looked down at him with the insolent manner which he knew so well.

"I say, what's the matter with you?" he asked.

"If you'll kindly give your order I'll get what you want. I can't stand talking all night."

"Tea and toasted bun, please," Philip answered briefly.

He was furious with her. He had *The Star* with him and read it elaborately when she brought the tea.

"If you'll give me my bill now I needn't trouble you again," he said icily.

She wrote out the slip, placed it on the table, and went back to the German. Soon she was talking to him with animation.

He was a man of middle height, with the round head of his nation and a sallow face; his moustache was large and bristling; he had on a tail-coat and gray trousers, and he wore a massive gold watch-chain. Philip thought the other girls looked from him to the pair at the table and exchanged significant glances. He felt certain they were laughing at him, and his blood boiled. He detested Mildred now with all his heart. He knew that the best thing he could do was to cease coming to the tea-shop, but he could not bear to think that he had been worsted in the affair, and he devised a plan to show her that he despised her. Next day he sat down at another table and ordered his tea from another waitress. Mildred's friend was there again and she was talking to him. She paid no attention to Philip, and so when he went out he chose a moment when she had to cross his path: as he passed he looked at her as though he had never seen her before. He repeated this for three or four days. He expected that presently she would take the opportunity to say something to him; he thought she would ask why he never came to one of her tables now, and he had prepared an answer charged with all the loathing he felt for her. He knew it was absurd to trouble, but he could not help himself. She had beaten him again. The German suddenly disappeared, but Philip still sat at other tables. She paid no attention to him. Suddenly he realised that what he did was a matter of complete indifference to her; he could go on in that way till doomsday, and it would have no effect.

"I've not finished yet," he said to himself.

The day after he sat down in his old seat, and when she came up said good-evening as though he had not ignored her for a week. His face was placid, but he could not prevent the mad beating of his heart. At that time the musical comedy had lately leaped into public favour, and he was sure that Mildred would be delighted to go to one.

"I say," he said suddenly, "I wonder if you'd dine with me one night and come to *The Belle of New York*. I'll get a couple of stalls."

He added the last sentence in order to tempt her. He knew that when the girls went to the play it was either in the pit, or, if some man took them, seldom to more expensive seats than the upper circle. Mildred's pale face showed no change of expression.

"I don't mind," she said.

"When will you come?"

"I get off early on Thursdays."

They made arrangements. Mildred lived with an aunt at

Herne Hill. The play began at eight, so they must dine at seven. She proposed that he should meet her in the second-class waiting-room at Victoria Station. She showed no pleasure, but accepted the invitation as though she conferred a favour. Philip was vaguely irritated.

LVII

Philip arrived at Victoria Station nearly half an hour before the time which Mildred had appointed, and sat down in the second-class waiting-room. He waited and she did not come. He began to grow anxious, and walked into the station watching the incoming suburban trains; the hour which she had fixed passed, and still there was no sign of her. Philip was impatient. He went into the other waiting-rooms and looked at the people sitting in them. Suddenly his heart gave a great thud.

"There you are. I thought you were never coming."

"I like that after keeping me waiting all this time. I had half a mind to go back home again."

"But you said you'd come to the second-class waiting-room."

"I didn't say any such thing. It isn't exactly likely I'd sit in the second-class room when I could sit in the first, is it?"

Though Philip was sure he had not made a mistake, he said nothing, and they got into a cab.

"Where are we dining?" she asked.

"I thought of the Adelphi Restaurant. Will that suit you?"

"I don't mind where we dine."

She spoke ungraciously. She was put out by being kept waiting and answered Philip's attempt at conversation with monosyllables. She wore a long cloak of some rough, dark material and a crochet shawl over her head. They reached the restaurant and sat down at a table. She looked round with satisfaction. The red shades to the candles on the tables, the gold of the decorations, the looking-glasses, lent the room a sumptuous air.

"I've never been here before."

She gave Philip a smile. She had taken off her cloak; and he saw that she wore a pale blue dress, cut square at the neck; and her hair was more elaborately arranged than ever. He had ordered champagne and when it came her eyes sparkled.

"You are going it," she said.

"Because I've ordered fiz?" he asked carelessly, as though he never drank anything else.

"I *was* surprised when you asked me to do a theatre with you."

Conversation did not go very easily, for she did not seem to have much to say; and Philip was nervously conscious that he was not

amusing her. She listened carelessly to his remarks, with her eyes on other diners, and made no pretence that she was interested in him. He made one or two little jokes, but she took them quite seriously. The only sign of vivacity he got was when he spoke of the other girls in the shop; she could not bear the manageress and told him all her misdeeds at length.

"I can't stick her at any price and all the airs she gives herself. Sometimes I've got more than half a mind to tell her something she doesn't think I know anything about."

"What is that?" asked Philip.

"Well, I happen to know that she's not above going to Eastbourne with a man for the week-end now and again. One of the girls has a married sister who goes there with her husband, and she's seen her. She was staying at the same boarding-house, and she 'ad a wedding-ring on, and I know for one she's not married."

Philip filled her glass, hoping that champagne would make her more affable; he was anxious that his little jaunt should be a success. He noticed that she held her knife as though it were a penholder, and when she drank protruded her little finger. He started several topics of conversation, but he could get little out of her, and he remembered with irritation that he had seen her talking nineteen to the dozen and laughing with the German. They finished dinner and went to the play. Philip was a very cultured young man, and he looked upon musical comedy with scorn. He thought the jokes vulgar and the melodies obvious; it seemed to him that they did these things much better in France; but Mildred enjoyed herself thoroughly; she laughed till her sides ached, looking at Philip now and then when something tickled her to exchange a glance of pleasure; and she applauded rapturously.

"This is the seventh time I've been," she said, after the first act, "and I don't mind if I come seven times more."

She was much interested in the women who surrounded them in the stalls. She pointed out to Philip those who were painted and those who wore false hair.

"It is horrible, these West-end people," she said. "I don't know how they can do it." She put her hand to her hair. "Mine's all my own, every bit of it."

She found no one to admire, and whenever she spoke of anyone it was to say something disagreeable. It made Philip uneasy. He supposed that next day she would tell the girls in the shop that he had taken her out and that he had bored her to death. He disliked her, and yet, he knew not why, he wanted to be with her. On the way home he asked:

"I hope you've enjoyed yourself?"

"Rather."

"Will you come out with me again one evening?"

"I don't mind."

He could never get beyond such expressions as that. Her indifference maddened him.

"That sounds as if you didn't much care if you came or not."

"Oh, if you don't take me out some other fellow will. I need never want for men who'll take me to the theatre."

Philip was silent. They came to the station, and he went to the booking-office.

"I've got my season," she said.

"I thought I'd take you home as it's rather late, if you don't mind."

"Oh, I don't mind if it gives you any pleasure."

He took a single first for her and a return for himself.

"Well, you're not mean, I will say that for you," she said, when he opened the carriage-door.

Philip did not know whether he was pleased or sorry when other people entered and it was impossible to speak. They got out at Herne Hill, and he accompanied her to the corner of the road in which she lived.

"I'll say good-night to you here," she said, holding out her hand. "You'd better not come up to the door. I know what people are, and I don't want to have anybody talking."

She said good-night and walked quickly away. He could see the white shawl in the darkness. He thought she might turn round, but she did not. Philip saw which house she went into, and in a moment he walked along to look at it. It was a trim, common little house of yellow brick, exactly like all the other little houses in the street. He stood outside for a few minutes, and presently the window on the top floor was darkened. Philip strolled slowly back to the station. The evening had been unsatisfactory. He felt irritated, restless, and miserable.

When he lay in bed he seemed still to see her sitting in the corner of the railway carriage, with the white crochet shawl over her head. He did not know how he was to get through the hours that must pass before his eyes rested on her again. He thought drowsily of her thin face, with its delicate features, and the greenish pallor of her skin. He was not happy with her, but he was unhappy away from her. He wanted to sit by her side and look at her, he wanted to touch her, he wanted . . . the thought came to him and he did not finish it, suddenly he grew wide awake . . . he

wanted to kiss the thin, pale mouth with its narrow lips. The truth came to him at last. He was in love with her. It was incredible.

He had often thought of falling in love, and there was one scene which he had pictured to himself over and over again. He saw himself coming into a ball-room; his eyes fell on a little group of men and women talking; and one of the women turned round. Her eyes fell upon him, and he knew that the gasp in his throat was in her throat too. He stood quite still. She was tall and dark and beautiful, with eyes like the night; she was dressed in white, and in her black hair shone diamonds; they stared at one another, forgetting that people surrounded them. He went straight up to her, and she moved a little towards him. Both felt that the formality of introduction was out of place. He spoke to her.

"I've been looking for you all my life," he said.

"You've come at last," she murmured.

"Will you dance with me?"

She surrendered herself to his outstretched hands and they danced. (Philip always pretended that he was not lame.) She danced divinely.

"I've never danced with anyone who danced like you," she said.

She tore up her programme, and they danced together the whole evening.

"I'm so thankful that I waited for you," he said to her. "I knew that in the end I must meet you."

People in the ball-room stared. They did not care. They did not wish to hide their passion. At last they went into the garden. He flung a light cloak over her shoulders and put her in a waiting cab. They caught the midnight train to Paris; and they sped through the silent, star-lit night into the unknown.

He thought of this old fancy of his, and it seemed impossible that he should be in love with Mildred Rogers. Her name was grotesque. He did not think her pretty; he hated the thinness of her, only that evening he had noticed how the bones of her chest stood out in evening-dress; he went over her features one by one; he did not like her mouth, and the unhealthiness of her colour vaguely repelled him. She was common. Her phrases, so bald and few, constantly repeated, showed the emptiness of her mind; he recalled her vulgar little laugh at the jokes of the musical comedy; and he remembered the little finger carefully extended when she held her glass to her mouth; her manners, like her conversation, were odiously genteel. He remembered her insolence; sometimes he had

felt inclined to box her ears; and suddenly, he knew not why, perhaps it was the thought of hitting her or the recollection of her tiny, beautiful ears, he was seized by an uprush of emotion. He yearned for her. He thought of taking her in his arms, the thin, fragile body, and kissing her pale mouth; he wanted to pass his fingers down the slightly greenish cheeks. He wanted her.

He had thought of love as a rapture which seized one so that all the world seemed spring-like, he had looked forward to an ecstatic happiness; but this was not happiness; it was a hunger of the soul, it was a painful yearning, it was a bitter anguish, he had never known before. He tried to think when it had first come to him. He did not know. He only remembered that each time he had gone into the shop, after the first two or three times, it had been with a little feeling in the heart that was pain; and he remembered that when she spoke to him he felt curiously breathless. When she left him it was wretchedness, and when she came to him again it was despair.

He stretched himself in his bed as a dog stretches himself. He wondered how he was going to endure that ceaseless aching of his soul.

LVIII

Philip woke early next morning, and his first thought was of Mildred. It struck him that he might meet her at Victoria Station and walk with her to the shop. He shaved quickly, scrambled into his clothes, and took a bus to the station. He was there by twenty to eight and watched the incoming trains. Crowds poured out of them, clerks and shop-people at that early hour, and thronged up the platform: they hurried along, sometimes in pairs, here and there a group of girls, but more often alone. They were white, most of them, ugly in the early morning, and they had an abstracted look; the younger ones walked lightly, as though the cement of the platform were pleasant to tread, but the others went as though impelled by a machine: their faces were set in an anxious frown.

At last Philip saw Mildred, and he went up to her eagerly.

"Good-morning," he said. "I thought I'd come and see how you were after last night."

She wore an old brown ulster and a sailor hat. It was very clear that she was not pleased to see him.

"Oh, I'm all right. I haven't got much time to waste."

"D'you mind if I walk down Victoria Street with you?"

"I'm none too early. I shall have to walk fast," she answered, looking down at Philip's club-foot.

He turned scarlet.

"I beg your pardon. I won't detain you."

"You can please yourself."

She went on, and he with a sinking heart made his way home to breakfast. He hated her. He knew he was a fool to bother about her; she was not the sort of woman who would ever care two straws for him, and she must look upon his deformity with distaste. He made up his mind that he would not go in to tea that afternoon, but, hating himself, he went. She nodded to him as he came in and smiled.

"I expect I was rather short with you this morning," she said. "You see, I didn't expect you, and it came like a surprise."

"Oh, it doesn't matter at all."

He felt that a great weight had suddenly been lifted from him. He was infinitely grateful for one word of kindness.

"Why don't you sit down?" he asked. "Nobody's wanting you just now."

"I don't mind if I do."

He looked at her, but could think of nothing to say; he racked his brains anxiously, seeking for a remark which should keep her by him; he wanted to tell her how much she meant to him; but he did not know how to make love now that he loved in earnest.

"Where's your friend with the fair moustache? I haven't seen him lately."

"Oh, he's gone back to Birmingham. He's in business there. He only comes up to London every now and again."

"Is he in love with you?"

"You'd better ask him," she said, with a laugh. "I don't know what it's got to do with you if he is."

A bitter answer leaped to his tongue, but he was learning self-restraint.

"I wonder why you say things like that," was all he permitted himself to say.

She looked at him with those indifferent eyes of hers.

"It looks as if you didn't set much store on me," he added.

"Why should I?"

"No reason at all."

He reached over for his paper.

"You are quick-tempered," she said, when she saw the gesture. "You do take offence easily."

He smiled and looked at her appealingly.

"Will you do something for me?" he asked.

"That depends what it is."

"Let me walk back to the station with you tonight."

"I don't mind."

He went out after tea and went back to his rooms, but at eight o'clock, when the shop closed, he was waiting outside.

"You are a caution," she said, when she came out. "I don't understand you."

"I shouldn't have thought it was very difficult," he answered bitterly.

"Did any of the girls see you waiting for me?"

"I don't know and I don't care."

"They all laugh at you, you know. They say you're spoony on me."

"Much you care," he muttered.

"Now then, quarrelsome."

At the station he took a ticket and said he was going to accompany her home.

"You don't seem to have much to do with your time," she said.

"I suppose I can waste it in my own way."

They seemed to be always on the verge of a quarrel. The fact was that he hated himself for loving her. She seemed to be constantly humiliating him, and for each snub that he endured he owed her a grudge. But she was in a friendly mood that evening, and talkative: she told him that her parents were dead; she gave him to understand that she did not have to earn her living, but worked for amusement.

"My aunt doesn't like my going to business. I can have the best of everything at home. I don't want you to think I work because I need to."

Philip knew that she was not speaking the truth. The gentility of her class made her use this pretence to avoid the stigma attached to earning her living.

"My family's very well-connected," she said.

Philip smiled faintly, and she noticed it.

"What are you laughing at?" she said quickly. "Don't you believe I'm telling you the truth?"

"Of course I do," he answered.

She looked at him suspiciously, but in a moment could not resist the temptation to impress him with the splendour of her early days.

"My father always kept a dog-cart, and we had three servants. We had a cook and a housemaid and an odd man. We used to grow beautiful roses. People used to stop at the gate and ask who the house belonged to, the roses were so beautiful. Of course it isn't very nice for me having to mix with them girls in the shop, it's not the class of person I've been used to, and sometimes I really think I'll give up business on that account. It's not the work I mind, don't think that; but it's the class of people I have to mix with."

They were sitting opposite one another in the train, and Philip, listening sympathetically to what she said, was quite happy. He was amused at her naïveté and slightly touched. There was a very faint colour in her cheeks. He was thinking that it would be delightful to kiss the tip of her chin.

"The moment you come into the shop I saw you was a gentleman in every sense of the word. Was your father a professional man?"

"He was a doctor."

"You can always tell a professional man. There's something about them, I don't know what it is, but I know at once."

They walked along from the station together.

"I say, I want you to come and see another play with me," he said.

"I don't mind," she said.

"You might go so far as to say you'd like to."

"Why?"

"It doesn't matter. Let's fix a day. Would Saturday night suit you?"

"Yes, that'll do."

They made further arrangements, and then found themselves at the corner of the road in which she lived. She gave him her hand, and he held it.

"I say, I do so awfully want to call you Mildred."

"You may if you like, I don't care."

"And you'll call me Philip, won't you?"

"I will if I can think of it. It seems more natural to call you Mr. Carey."

He drew her slightly towards him, but she leaned back.

"What are you doing?"

"Won't you kiss me good-night?" he whispered.

"Impudence!" she said.

She snatched away her hand and hurried towards her house.

Philip bought tickets for Saturday night. It was not one of the days on which she got off early and therefore she would have no time to go home and change; but she meant to bring a frock up with her in the morning and hurry into her clothes at the shop. If the manageress was in a good temper she would let her go at seven. Philip had agreed to wait outside from a quarter past seven onwards. He looked forward to the occasion with painful eagerness, for in the cab on the way from the theatre to the station he thought she would let him kiss her. The vehicle gave every facility for a man to put his arm round a girl's waist, (an advantage which the hansom had over the taxi of the present day,) and the delight of that was worth the cost of the evening's entertainment.

But on Saturday afternoon when he went in to have tea, in order to confirm the arrangements, he met the man with the fair moustache coming out of the shop. He knew by now that he was called Miller. He was a naturalized German, who had anglicised his name, and he had lived many years in England. Philip had heard him speak, and, though his English was fluent and natural, it had

not quite the intonation of the native. Philip knew that he was flirting with Mildred, and he was horribly jealous of him; but he took comfort in the coldness of her temperament, which otherwise distressed him; and, thinking her incapable of passion, he looked upon his rival as no better off than himself. But his heart sank now, for his first thought was that Miller's sudden appearance might interfere with the jaunt which he had so looked forward to. He entered, sick with apprehension. The waitress came up to him, took his order for tea, and presently brought it.

"I'm awfully sorry," she said, with an expression on her face of real distress. "I shan't be able to come tonight after all."

"Why?" said Philip.

"Don't look so stern about it," she laughed. "It's not my fault. My aunt was taken ill last night, and it's the girl's night out so I must go and sit with her. She can't be left alone, can she?"

"It doesn't matter. I'll see you home instead."

"But you've got the tickets. It would be a pity to waste them."

He took them out of his pocket and deliberately tore them up.

"What are you doing that for?"

"You don't suppose I want to go and see a rotten musical comedy by myself, do you? I only took seats there for your sake."

"You can't see me home if that's what you mean?"

"You've made other arrangements."

"I don't know what you mean by that. You're just as selfish as all the rest of them. You only think of yourself. It's not my fault if my aunt's queer."

She quickly wrote out his bill and left him. Philip knew very little about women, or he would have been aware that one should accept their most transparent lies. He made up his mind that he would watch the shop and see for certain whether Mildred went out with the German. He had an unhappy passion for certainty. At seven he stationed himself on the opposite pavement. He looked about for Miller, but did not see him. In ten minutes she came out, she had on the cloak and shawl which she had worn when he took her to the Shaftesbury Theatre. It was obvious that she was not going home. She saw him before he had time to move away, started a little, and then came straight up to him.

"What are you doing here?" she said.

"Taking the air," he answered.

"You're spying on me, you dirty little cad. I thought you was a gentleman."

"Did you think a gentleman would be likely to take any interest in you?" he murmured.

There was a devil within him which forced him to make matters worse. He wanted to hurt her as much as she was hurting him.

"I suppose I can change my mind if I like. I'm not obliged to come out with you. I tell you I'm going home, and I won't be followed or spied upon."

"Have you seen Miller today?"

"That's no business of yours. In point of fact I haven't, so you're wrong again."

"I saw him this afternoon. He'd just come out of the shop when I went in."

"Well, what if he did? I can go out with him if I want to, can't I? I don't know what you've got to say to it."

"He's keeping you waiting, isn't he?"

"Well, I'd rather wait for him than have you wait for me. Put that in your pipe and smoke it. And now p'raps you'll go off home and mind your own business in future."

His mood changed suddenly from anger to despair, and his voice trembled when he spoke.

"I say, don't be beastly with me, Mildred. You know I'm awfully fond of you. I think I love you with all my heart. Won't you change your mind? I was looking forward to this evening so awfully. You see, he hasn't come, and he can't care twopence about you really. Won't you dine with me? I'll get some more tickets, and we'll go anywhere you like."

"I tell you I won't. It's no good you talking. I've made up my mind, and when I make up my mind I keep to it."

He looked at her for a moment. His heart was torn with anguish. People were hurrying past them on the pavement, and cabs and omnibuses rolled by noisily. He saw that Mildred's eyes were wandering. She was afraid of missing Miller in the crowd.

"I can't go on like this," groaned Philip. "It's too degrading. If I go now I go for good. Unless you'll come with me tonight you'll never see me again."

"You seem to think that'll be an awful thing for me. All I say is, good riddance to bad rubbish."

"Then good-bye."

He nodded and limped away slowly, for he hoped with all his heart that she would call him back. At the next lamp-post he stopped and looked over his shoulder. He thought she might beckon to him—he was willing to forget everything, he was ready for any humiliation—but she had turned away, and apparently had ceased to trouble about him. He realised that she was glad to be quit of him.

LIX

PHILIP passed the evening wretchedly. He had told his landlady that he would not be in, so there was nothing for him to eat, and he had to go to Gatti's for dinner. Afterwards he went back to his rooms, but Griffiths on the floor above him was having a party, and the noisy merriment made his own misery more hard to bear. He went to a music-hall, but it was Saturday night and there was standing-room only: after half an hour of boredom his legs grew tired and he went home. He tried to read, but he could not fix his attention; and yet it was necessary that he should work hard. His examination in biology was in little more than a fortnight, and, though it was easy, he had neglected his lectures of late and was conscious that he knew nothing. It was only a *viva*, however, and he felt sure that in a fortnight he could find out enough about the subject to scrape through. He had confidence in his intelligence. He threw aside his book and gave himself up to thinking deliberately of the matter which was in his mind all the time.

He reproached himself bitterly for his behaviour that evening. Why had he given her the alternative that she must dine with him or else never see him again? Of course she refused. He should have allowed for her pride. He had burnt his ships behind him. It would not be so hard to bear if he thought that she was suffering now, but he knew her too well: she was perfectly indifferent to him. If he hadn't been a fool he would have pretended to believe her story; he ought to have had the strength to conceal his disappointment and the self-control to master his temper. He could not tell why he loved her. He had read of the idealisation that takes place in love, but he saw her exactly as she was. She was not amusing or clever, her mind was common; she had a vulgar shrewdness which revolted him, she had no gentleness nor softness. As she would have put it herself, she was on the make. What aroused her admiration was a clever trick played on an unsuspecting person; to 'do' somebody always gave her satisfaction. Philip laughed savagely as he thought of her gentility and the refinement with which she ate her food; she could not bear a coarse word, so far as her limited vocabulary reached she had a passion for euphemisms, and she scented indecency everywhere; she never spoke of trousers

but referred to them as nether garments; she thought it slightly indelicate to blow her nose and did it in a deprecating way. She was dreadfully anæmic and suffered from the dyspepsia which accompanies that ailing. Philip was repelled by her flat breast and narrow hips, and he hated the vulgar way in which she did her hair. He loathed and despised himself for loving her.

The fact remained that he was helpless. He felt just as he had felt sometimes in the hands of a bigger boy at school. He had struggled against the superior strength till his own strength was gone, and he was rendered quite powerless—he remembered the peculiar languor he had felt in his limbs, almost as though he were paralysed—so that he could not help himself at all. He might have been dead. He felt just that same weakness now. He loved the woman so that he knew he had never loved before. He did not mind her faults of person or of character, he thought he loved them too: at all events they meant nothing to him. It did not seem himself that was concerned; he felt that he had been seized by some strange force that moved him against his will, contrary to his interests; and because he had a passion for freedom he hated the chains which bound him. He laughed at himself when he thought how often he had longed to experience the overwhelming passion. He cursed himself because he had given way to it. He thought of the beginnings; nothing of all this would have happened if he had not gone into the shop with Dunsford. The whole thing was his own fault. Except for his ridiculous vanity he would never have troubled himself with the ill-mannered slut.

At all events the occurrences of that evening had finished the whole affair. Unless he was lost to all sense of shame he could not go back. He wanted passionately to get rid of the love that obsessed him; it was degrading and hateful. He must prevent himself from thinking of her. In a little while the anguish he suffered must grow less. His mind went back to the past. He wondered whether Emily Wilkinson and Fanny Price had endured on his account anything like the torment that he suffered now. He felt a pang of remorse.

"I didn't know then what it was like," he said to himself.

He slept very badly. The next day was Sunday, and he worked at his biology. He sat with the book in front of him, forming the words with his lips in order to fix his attention, but he could remember nothing. He found his thoughts going back to Mildred every minute, and he repeated to himself the exact words of the quarrel they had had. He had to force himself back to his book. He went out for a walk. The streets on the South side of the river

were dingy enough on week-days, but there was an energy, a coming and going, which gave them a sordid vivacity; but on Sundays, with no shops open, no carts in the roadway, silent and depressed, they were indescribably dreary. Philip thought that day would never end. But he was so tired that he slept heavily, and when Monday came he entered upon life with determination. Christmas was approaching, and a good many of the students had gone into the country for the short holiday between the two parts of the winter session; but Philip had refused his uncle's invitation to go down to Blackstable. He had given the approaching examination as his excuse, but in point of fact he had been unwilling to leave London and Mildred. He had neglected his work so much that now he had only a fortnight to learn what the curriculum allowed three months for. He set to work seriously. He found it easier each day not to think of Mildred. He congratulated himself on his force of character. The pain he suffered was no longer anguish, but a sort of soreness, like what one might be expected to feel if one had been thrown off a horse and, though no bones were broken, were bruised all over and shaken. Philip found that he was able to observe with curiosity the condition he had been in during the last few weeks. He analysed his feelings with interest. He was a little amused at himself. One thing that struck him was how little under those circumstances it mattered what one thought; the system of personal philosophy, which had given him great satisfaction to devise, had not served him. He was puzzled by this.

But sometimes in the street he would see a girl who looked so like Mildred that his heart seemed to stop beating. Then he could not help himself, he hurried on to catch her up, eager and anxious, only to find that it was a total stranger. Men came back from the country, and he went with Dunsford to have tea at an A.B.C. shop. The well-known uniform made him so miserable that he could not speak. The thought came to him that perhaps she had been transferred to another establishment of the firm for which she worked, and he might suddenly find himself face to face with her. The idea filled him with panic, so that he feared Dunsford would see that something was the matter with him: he could not think of anything to say; he pretended to listen to what Dunsford was talking about; the conversation maddened him; and it was all he could do to prevent himself from crying out to Dunsford for Heaven's sake to hold his tongue.

Then came the day of his examination. Philip, when his turn arrived, went forward to the examiner's table with the utmost confidence. He answered three or four questions. Then they showed

him various specimens; he had been to very few lectures and, as soon as he was asked about things which he could not learn from books, he was floored. He did what he could to hide his ignorance, the examiner did not insist, and soon his ten minutes were over. He felt certain he had passed; but next day, when he went up to the examination buildings to see the result posted on the door, he was astounded not to find his number among those who had satisfied the examiners. In amazement he read the list three times. Dunsford was with him.

"I say, I'm awfully sorry you're ploughed," he said.

He had just inquired Philip's number. Philip turned and saw by his radiant face that Dunsford had passed.

"Oh, it doesn't matter a bit," said Philip. "I'm jolly glad you're all right. I shall go up again in July."

He was very anxious to pretend he did not mind, and on their way back along The Embankment insisted on talking of indifferent things. Dunsford good-naturedly wanted to discuss the causes of Philip's failure, but Philip was obstinately casual. He was horribly mortified; and the fact that Dunsford, whom he looked upon as a very pleasant but quite stupid fellow, had passed made his own rebuff harder to bear. He had always been proud of his intelligence, and now he asked himself desperately whether he was not mistaken in the opinion he held of himself. In the three months of the winter session the students who had joined in October had already shaken down into groups, and it was clear which were brilliant, which were clever or industrious, and which were 'rotters.' Philip was conscious that his failure was a surprise to no one but himself. It was tea-time, and he knew that a lot of men would be having tea in the basement of the Medical School: those who had passed the examination would be exultant, those who disliked him would look at him with satisfaction, and the poor devils who had failed would sympathise with him in order to receive sympathy. His instinct was not to go near the hospital for a week, when the affair would be no more thought of, but, because he hated so much to go just then, he went: he wanted to inflict suffering upon himself. He forgot for the moment his maxim of life to follow his inclinations with due regard for the policeman round the corner; or, if he acted in accordance with it, there must have been some strange morbidity in his nature which made him take a grim pleasure in self-torture.

But later on, when he had endured the ordeal to which he forced himself, going out into the night after the noisy conversation in the smoking-room, he was seized with a feeling of utter loneliness.

He seemed to himself absurd and futile. He had an urgent need of consolation, and the temptation to see Mildred was irresistible. He thought bitterly that there was small chance of consolation from her; but he wanted to see her even if he did not speak to her; after all, she was a waitress and would be obliged to serve him. She was the only person in the world he cared for. There was no use in hiding that fact from himself. Of course it would be humiliating to go back to the shop as though nothing had happened, but he had not much self-respect left. Though he would not confess it to himself, he had hoped each day that she would write to him; she knew that a letter addressed to the hospital would find him; but she had not written: it was evident that she cared nothing if she saw him again or not. And he kept on repeating to himself:

"I must see her. I must see her."

The desire was so great that he could not give the time necessary to walk, but jumped in a cab. He was too thrifty to use one when it could possibly be avoided. He stood outside the shop for a minute or two. The thought came to him that perhaps she had left, and in terror he walked in quickly. He saw her at once. He sat down and she came up to him.

"A cup of tea and a muffin, please," he ordered.

He could hardly speak. He was afraid for a moment that he was going to cry.

"I almost thought you was dead," she said.

She was smiling. Smiling! She seemed to have forgotten completely that last scene which Philip had repeated to himself a hundred times.

"I thought if you'd wanted to see me you'd write," he answered.

"I've got too much to do to think about writing letters."

It seemed impossible for her to say a gracious thing. Philip cursed the fate which chained him to such a woman. She went away to fetch his tea.

"Would you like me to sit down for a minute or two?" she said, when she brought it.

"Yes."

"Where have you been all this time?"

"I've been in London."

"I thought you'd gone away for the holidays. Why haven't you been in then?"

Philip looked at her with haggard, passionate eyes.

"Don't you remember that I said I'd never see you again?"

"What are you doing now then?"

She seemed anxious to make him drink up the cup of his humiliation; but he knew her well enough to know that she spoke at random; she hurt him frightfully, and never even tried to. He did not answer.

"It was a nasty trick you played on me, spying on me like that. I always thought you was a gentleman in every sense of the word."

"Don't be beastly to me, Mildred. I can't bear it."

"You are a funny feller. I can't make you out."

"It's very simple. I'm such a blasted fool as to love you with all my heart and soul, and I know that you don't care twopence for me."

"If you had been a gentleman I think you'd have come next day and begged my pardon."

She had no mercy. He looked at her neck and thought how he would like to jab it with the knife he had for his muffin. He knew enough anatomy to make pretty certain of getting the carotid artery. And at the same time he wanted to cover her pale, thin face with kisses.

"If I could only make you understand how frightfully I'm in love with you."

"You haven't begged my pardon yet."

He grew very white. She felt that she had done nothing wrong on that occasion. She wanted him now to humble himself. He was very proud. For one instant he felt inclined to tell her to go to hell, but he dared not. His passion made him abject. He was willing to submit to anything rather than not see her.

"I'm very sorry, Mildred. I beg your pardon."

He had to force the words out. It was a horrible effort.

"Now you've said that I don't mind telling you that I wish I had come out with you that evening. I thought Miller was a gentleman, but I've discovered my mistake now. I soon sent him about his business."

Philip gave a little gasp.

"Mildred, won't you come out with me tonight? Let's go and dine somewhere."

"Oh, I can't. My aunt'll be expecting me home."

"I'll send her a wire. You can say you've been detained in the shop; she won't know any better. Oh, do come, for God's sake. I haven't seen you for so long, and I want to talk to you."

She looked down at her clothes.

"Never mind about that. We'll go somewhere where it doesn't matter how you're dressed. And we'll go to a music-hall afterwards. Please say yes. It would give me so much pleasure."

She hesitated a moment; he looked at her with pitifully appealing eyes.

"Well, I don't mind if I do. I haven't been out anywhere since I don't know how long."

It was with the greatest difficulty he could prevent himself from seizing her hand there and then to cover it with kisses.

LX

They dined in Soho. Philip was tremulous with joy. It was not one of the more crowded of those cheap restaurants where the respectable and needy dine in the belief that it is bohemian and the assurance that it is economical. It was a humble establishment, kept by a good man from Rouen and his wife, that Philip had discovered by accident. He had been attracted by the Gallic look of the window, in which was generally an uncooked steak on one plate and on each side two dishes of raw vegetables. There was one seedy French waiter, who was attempting to learn English in a house where he never heard anything but French; and the customers were a few ladies of easy virtue, a *ménage* or two, who had their own napkins reserved for them, and a few queer men who came in for hurried, scanty meals.

Here Mildred and Philip were able to get a table to themselves. Philip sent the waiter for a bottle of Burgundy from the neighbouring tavern, and they had a *potage aux herbes,* a steak from the window *aux pommes,* and an *omelette au kirsch.* There was really an air of romance in the meal and in the place. Mildred, at first a little reserved in her appreciation—"I never quite trust these foreign places, you never know what there is in these messed up dishes"—was insensibly moved by it.

"I like this place, Philip," she said. "You feel you can put your elbows on the table, don't you?"

A tall fellow came in, with a mane of gray hair and a ragged thin beard. He wore a dilapidated cloak and a wide-awake hat. He nodded to Philip, who had met him there before.

"He looks like an anarchist," said Mildred.

"He is, one of the most dangerous in Europe. He's been in every prison on the Continent and has assassinated more persons than any gentleman unhung. He always goes about with a bomb in his pocket, and of course it makes conversation a little difficult because if you don't agree with him he lays it on the table in a marked manner."

She looked at the man with horror and surprise, and then glanced suspiciously at Philip. She saw that his eyes were laughing. She frowned a little.

"You're getting at me."

He gave a little shout of joy. He was so happy. But Mildred didn't like being laughed at.

"I don't see anything funny in telling lies."

"Don't be cross."

He took her hand, which was lying on the table, and pressed it gently.

"You are lovely, and I could kiss the ground you walk on," he said.

The greenish pallor of her skin intoxicated him, and her thin white lips had an extraordinary fascination. Her anæmia made her rather short of breath, and she held her mouth slightly open. It seemed to add somehow to the attractiveness of her face.

"You do like me a bit, don't you?" he asked.

"Well, if I didn't I suppose I shouldn't be here, should I? You're a gentleman in every sense of the word, I will say that for you."

They had finished their dinner and were drinking coffee. Philip, throwing economy to the winds, smoked a threepenny cigar.

"You can't imagine what a pleasure it is to me just to sit opposite and look at you. I've yearned for you. I was sick for a sight of you."

Mildred smiled a little and faintly flushed. She was not then suffering from the dyspepsia which generally attacked her immediately after a meal. She felt more kindly disposed to Philip than ever before, and the unaccustomed tenderness in her eyes filled him with joy. He knew instinctively that it was madness to give himself into her hands; his only chance was to treat her casually and never allow her to see the untamed passions that seethed in his breast; she would only take advantage of his weakness; but he could not be prudent now: he told her all the agony he had endured during the separation from her; he told her of his struggles with himself, how he had tried to get over his passion, thought he had succeeded, and how he found out that it was as strong as ever. He knew that he had never really wanted to get over it. He loved her so much that he did not mind suffering. He bared his heart to her. He showed her proudly all his weakness.

Nothing would have pleased him more than to sit on in the cosy, shabby restaurant, but he knew that Mildred wanted entertainment. She was restless and, wherever she was, wanted after a while to go somewhere else. He dared not bore her.

"I say, how about going to a music-hall?" he said.

He thought rapidly that if she cared for him at all she would say she preferred to stay there.

"I was just thinking we ought to be going if we are going," she answered.

"Come on then."

Philip waited impatiently for the end of the performance. He had made up his mind exactly what to do, and when they got into the cab he passed his arm, as though almost by accident, round her waist. But he drew it back quickly with a little cry. He had pricked himself. She laughed.

"There, that comes of putting your arm where it's got no business to be," she said. "I always know when men try and put their arm round my waist. That pin always catches them."

"I'll be more careful."

He put his arm round again. She made no objection.

"I'm so comfortable," he sighed blissfully.

"So long as you're happy," she retorted.

They drove down St. James' Street into the Park, and Philip quickly kissed her. He was strangely afraid of her, and it required all his courage. She turned her lips to him without speaking. She neither seemed to mind nor to like it.

"If you only knew how long I've wanted to do that," he murmured.

He tried to kiss her again, but she turned her head away.

"Once is enough," she said.

On the chance of kissing her a second time he travelled down to Herne Hill with her, and at the end of the road in which she lived he asked her:

"Won't you give me another kiss?"

She looked at him indifferently and then glanced up the road to see that no one was in sight.

"I don't mind."

He seized her in his arms and kissed her passionately, but she pushed him away.

"Mind my hat, silly. You are clumsy," she said.

LXI

He saw her then every day. He began going to lunch at the shop, but Mildred stopped him: she said it made the girls talk; so he had to content himself with tea; but he always waited about to walk with her to the station; and once or twice a week they dined together. He gave her little presents, a gold bangle, gloves, handkerchiefs, and the like. He was spending more than he could afford, but he could not help it: it was only when he gave her anything that she showed any affection. She knew the price of everything, and her gratitude was in exact proportion with the value of his gift. He did not care. He was too happy when she volunteered to kiss him to mind by what means he got her demonstrativeness. He discovered that she found Sundays at home tedious, so he went down to Herne Hill in the morning, met her at the end of the road, and went to church with her.

"I always like to go to church once," she said. "It looks well, doesn't it?"

Then she went back to dinner, he got a scrappy meal at a hotel, and in the afternoon they took a walk in Brockwell Park. They had nothing much to say to one another, and Philip, desperately afraid she was bored, (she was very easily bored,) racked his brain for topics of conversation. He realised that these walks amused neither of them, but he could not bear to leave her, and did all he could to lengthen them till she became tired and out of temper. He knew that she did not care for him, and he tried to force a love which his reason told him was not in her nature: she was cold. He had no claim on her, but he could not help being exacting. Now that they were more intimate he found it less easy to control his temper; he was often irritable and could not help saying bitter things. Often they quarrelled, and she would not speak to him for a while; but this always reduced him to subjection, and he crawled before her. He was angry with himself for showing so little dignity. He grew furiously jealous if he saw her speaking to any other man in the shop, and when he was jealous he seemed to be beside himself. He would deliberately insult her, leave the shop and spend afterwards a sleepless night tossing on his bed, by turns angry and remorseful. Next day he would go to the shop and appeal for forgiveness.

"Don't be angry with me," he said. "I'm so awfully fond of you that I can't help myself."

"One of these days you'll go too far," she answered.

He was anxious to come to her home in order that the greater intimacy should give him an advantage over the stray acquaintances she made during her working-hours; but she would not let him.

"My aunt would think it so funny," she said.

He suspected that her refusal was due only to a disinclinatior to let him see her aunt. Mildred had represented her as the widov of a professional man, (that was her formula of distinction,) and was uneasily conscious that the good woman could hardly be called distinguished. Philip imagined that she was in point of fact the widow of a small tradesman. He knew that Mildred was a snob. But he found no means by which he could indicate to her that he did not mind how common the aunt was.

Their worst quarrel took place one evening at dinner when she told him that a man had asked her to go to a play with him. Philip turned pale, and his face grew hard and stern.

"You're not going?" he said.

"Why shouldn't I? He's a very nice gentlemanly fellow."

"I'll take you anywhere you like."

"But that isn't the same thing. I can't always go about with you. Besides he's asked me to fix my own day, and I'll just go one evening when I'm not going out with you. It won't make any difference to you."

"If you had any sense of decency, if you had any gratitude, you wouldn't dream of going."

"I don't know what you mean by gratitude. If you're referring to the things you've given me you can have them back. I don't want them."

Her voice had the shrewish tone it sometimes got.

"It's not very lively, always going about with you. It's always do you love me, do you love me, till I just get about sick of it."

(He knew it was madness to go on asking her that, but he could not help himself.

"Oh, I like you all right," she would answer.

"Is that all? I love you with all my heart."

"I'm not that sort, I'm not one to say much."

"If you knew how happy just one word would make me!"

"Well, what I always say is, people must take me as they find me, and if they don't like it they can lump it."

But sometimes she expressed herself more plainly still, and, when he asked the question, answered:

"Oh, don't go on at that again."

Then he became sulky and silent. He hated her.)

And now he said:

"Oh, well, if you feel like that about it I wonder you condescend to come out with me at all."

"It's not my seeking, you can be very sure of that, you just force me to."

His pride was bitterly hurt, and he answered madly.

"You think I'm just good enough to stand you dinners and theatres when there's no one else to do it, and when someone else turns up I can go to hell. Thank you, I'm about sick of being made a convenience."

"I'm not going to be talked to like that by anyone. I'll just show you how much I want your dirty dinner."

She got up, put on her jacket, and walked quickly out of the restaurant. Philip sat on. He determined he would not move, but ten minutes afterwards he jumped in a cab and followed her. He guessed that she would take a 'bus to Victoria, so that they would arrive about the same time. He saw her on the platform, escaped her notice, and went down to Herne Hill in the same train. He did not want to speak to her till she was on the way home and could not escape him.

As soon as she had turned out of the main street, brightly lit and noisy with traffic, he caught her up.

"Mildred," he called.

She walked on and would neither look at him nor answer. He repeated her name. Then she stopped and faced him.

"What d'you want? I saw you hanging about Victoria. Why don't you leave me alone?"

"I'm awfully sorry. Won't you make it up?"

"No. I'm sick of your temper and your jealousy. I don't care for you, I never have cared for you, and I never shall care for you. I don't want to have anything more to do with you."

She walked on quickly, and he had to hurry to keep up with her.

"You never make allowances for me," he said. "It's all very well to be jolly and amiable when you're indifferent to anyone. It's very hard when you're as much in love as I am. Have mercy on me. I don't mind that you don't care for me. After all you can't help it. I only want you to let me love you."

She walked on, refusing to speak, and Philip saw with agony that they had only a few hundred yards to go before they reached

her house. He abased himself. He poured out an incoherent story of love and penitence.

"If you'll only forgive me this time I promise you you'll never have to complain of me in future. You can go out with whoever you choose. I'll be only too glad if you'll come with me when you've got nothing better to do."

She stopped again, for they had reached the corner at which he always left her.

"Now you can take yourself off. I won't have you coming up to the door."

"I won't go till you say you'll forgive me."

"I'm sick and tired of the whole thing."

He hesitated a moment, for he had an instinct that he could say something that would move her. It made him feel almost sick to utter the words.

"It is cruel, I have so much to put up with. You don't know what it is to be a cripple. Of course you don't like me. I can't expect you to."

"Philip, I didn't mean that," she answered quickly, with a sudden break of pity in her voice. "You know it's not true."

He was beginning to act now, and his voice was husky and low.

"Oh, I've felt it," he said.

She took his hand and looked at him, and her own eyes were filled with tears.

"I promise you it never made any difference to me. I never thought about it after the first day or two."

He kept a gloomy, tragic silence. He wanted her to think he was overcome with emotion.

"You know I like you awfully, Philip. Only you are so trying sometimes. Let's make it up."

She put up her lips to his, and with a sigh of relief he kissed her.

"Now are you happy again?" she asked.

"Madly."

She bade him good-night and hurried down the road. Next day he took her in a little watch with a brooch to pin on her dress. She had been hankering for it.

But three or four days later, when she brought him his tea, Mildred said to him:

"You remember what you promised the other night? You mean to keep that, don't you?"

"Yes."

He knew exactly what she meant and was prepared for her next words.

"Because I'm going out with that gentleman I told you about to-night."

"All right. I hope you'll enjoy yourself."

"You don't mind, do you?"

He had himself now under excellent control.

"I don't like it," he smiled, "but I'm not going to make myself more disagreeable than I can help."

She was excited over the outing and talked about it willingly. Philip wondered whether she did so in order to pain him or merely because she was callous. He was in the habit of condoning her cruelty by the thought of her stupidity. She had not the brains to see when she was wounding him.

"It's not much fun to be in love with a girl who has no imagination and no sense of humour," he thought, as he listened.

But the want of these things excused her. He felt that if he had not realised this he could never forgive her for the pain she caused him.

"He's got seats for the Tivoli," she said. "He gave me my choice and I chose that. And we're going to dine at the Café Royal. He says it's the most expensive place in London."

"He's a gentleman in every sense of the word," thought Philip, but he clenched his teeth to prevent himself from uttering a syllable.

Philip went to the Tivoli and saw Mildred with her companion, a smooth-faced young man with sleek hair and the spruce look of a commercial traveller, sitting in the second row of the stalls. Mildred wore a black picture hat with ostrich feathers in it, which became her well. She was listening to her host with that quiet smile which Philip knew; she had no vivacity of expression, and it required broad farce to excite her laughter; but Philip could see that she was interested and amused. He thought to himself bitterly that her companion, flashy and jovial, exactly suited her. Her sluggish temperament made her appreciate noisy people. Philip had a passion for discussion, but no talent for small-talk. He admired the easy drollery of which some of his friends were masters, Lawson for instance, and his sense of inferiority made him shy and awkward. The things which interested him bored Mildred. She expected men to talk about football and racing, and he knew nothing of either. He did not know the catchwords which only need be said to excite a laugh.

Printed matter had always been a fetish to Philip, and now, in order to make himself more interesting, he read industriously *The Sporting Times*.

LXII

PHILIP did not surrender himself willingly to the passion that consumed him. He knew that all things human are transitory and therefore that it must cease one day or another. He looked forward to that day with eager longing. Love was like a parasite in his heart, nourishing a hateful existence on his life's blood; it absorbed his existence so intensely that he could take pleasure in nothing else. He had been used to delight in the grace of St. James' Park, and often he sat and looked at the branches of a tree silhouetted against the sky, it was like a Japanese print; and he found a continual magic in the beautiful Thames with its barges and its wharfs; the changing sky of London had filled his soul with pleasant fancies. But now beauty meant nothing to him. He was bored and restless when he was not with Mildred. Sometimes he thought he would console his sorrow by looking at pictures, but he walked through the National Gallery like a sight-seer; and no picture called up in him a thrill of emotion. He wondered if he could ever care again for all the things he had loved. He had been devoted to reading, but now books were meaningless; and he spent his spare hours in the smoking-room of the hospital club, turning over innumerable periodicals. This love was a torment, and he resented bitterly the subjugation in which it held him; he was a prisoner and he longed for freedom.

Sometimes he awoke in the morning and felt nothing; his soul leaped, for he thought he was free; he loved no longer; but in a little while, as he grew wide awake, the pain settled in his heart, and he knew that he was not cured yet. Though he yearned for Mildred so madly he despised her. He thought to himself that there could be no greater torture in the world than at the same time to love and to contemn.

Philip, burrowing as was his habit into the state of his feelings, discussing with himself continually his condition, came to the conclusion that he could only cure himself of his degrading passion by making Mildred his mistress. It was sexual hunger that he suffered from, and if he could satisfy this he might free himself from the intolerable chains that bound him. He knew that Mildred did not care for him at all in that way. When he kissed her passionately she withdrew herself from him with instinctive distaste.

She had no sensuality. Sometimes he had tried to make her jealous by talking of adventures in Paris, but they did not interest her; once or twice he had sat at other tables in the tea-shop and affected to flirt with the waitress who attended them, but she was entirely indifferent. He could see that it was no pretence on her part.

"You didn't mind my not sitting at one of your tables this afternoon?" he asked once, when he was walking to the station with her. "Yours seemed to be all full."

This was not a fact, but she did not contradict him. Even if his desertion meant nothing to her he would have been grateful if she had pretended it did. A reproach would have been balm to his soul.

"I think it's silly of you to sit at the same table every day. You ought to give the other girls a turn now and again."

But the more he thought of it the more he was convinced that complete surrender on her part was his only way to freedom. He was like a knight of old, metamorphosed by magic spells, who sought the potions which should restore him to his fair and proper form. Philip had only one hope. Mildred greatly desired to go to Paris. To her, as to most English people, it was the centre of gaiety and fashion: she had heard of the Magasin du Louvre, where you could get the very latest thing for about half the price you had to pay in London; a friend of hers had passed her honeymoon in Paris and had spent all day at the Louvre; and she and her husband, my dear, they never went to bed till six in the morning all the time they were there; the Moulin Rouge and I don't know what all. Philip did not care that if she yielded to his desires it would only be the unwilling price she paid for the gratification of her wish. He did not care upon what terms he satisfied his passion. He had even had a mad, melodramatic idea to drug her. He had plied her with liquor in the hope of exciting her, but she had no taste for wine; and though she liked him to order champagne because it looked well, she never drank more than half a glass. She liked to leave untouched a large glass filled to the brim.

"It shows the waiters who you are," she said.

Philip chose an opportunity when she seemed more than usually friendly. He had an examination in anatomy at the end of March. Easter, which came a week later, would give Mildred three whole days holiday.

"I say, why don't you come over to Paris then?" he suggested. "We'd have such a ripping time."

"How could you? It would cost no end of money."

Philip had thought of that. It would cost at least five-and-

twenty pounds. It was a large sum to him. He was willing to spend his last penny on her.

"What does that matter? Say you'll come, darling."

"What next, I should like to know. I can't see myself going away with a man that I wasn't married to. You oughtn't to suggest such a thing."

"What does it matter?"

He enlarged on the glories of the Rue de la Paix and the garish splendour of the Folies Bergères. He described the Louvre and the Bon Marché. He told her about the Cabaret du Néant, the Abbaye, and the various haunts to which foreigners go. He painted in glowing colours the side of Paris which he despised. He pressed her to come with him.

"You know, you say you love me, but if you really loved me you'd want to marry me. You've never asked me to marry you."

"You know I can't afford it. After all, I'm in my first year, I shan't earn a penny for six years."

"Oh, I'm not blaming you. I wouldn't marry you if you went down on your bended knees to me."

He had thought of marriage more than once, but it was a step from which he shrank. In Paris he had come by the opinion that marriage was a ridiculous institution of the philistines. He knew also that a permanent tie would ruin him. He had middle-class instincts, and it seemed a dreadful thing to him to marry a waitress. A common wife would prevent him from getting a decent practice. Besides, he had only just enough money to last him till he was qualified; he could not keep a wife even if they arranged not to have children. He thought of Cronshaw bound to a vulgar slattern, and he shuddered with dismay. He foresaw what Mildred, with her genteel ideas and her mean mind, would become: it was impossible for him to marry her. But he decided only with his reason; he felt that he must have her whatever happened; and if he could not get her without marrying her he would do that; the future could look after itself. It might end in disaster; he did not care. When he got hold of an idea it obsessed him, he could think of nothing else, and he had a more than common power to persuade himself of the reasonableness of what he wished to do. He found himself overthrowing all the sensible arguments which had occurred to him against marriage. Each day he found that he was more passionately devoted to her; and his unsatisfied love became angry and resentful.

"By George, if I marry her I'll make her pay for all the suffering I've endured," he said to himself.

At last he could bear the agony no longer. After dinner one evening in the little restaurant in Soho, to which now they often went, he spoke to her.

"I say, did you mean it the other day that you wouldn't marry me if I asked you?"

"Yes, why not?"

"Because I can't live without you. I want you with me always. I've tried to get over it and I can't. I never shall now. I want you to marry me."

She had read too many novelettes not to know how to take such an offer.

"I'm sure I'm very grateful to you, Philip. I'm very much flattered at your proposal."

"Oh, don't talk rot. You will marry me, won't you?"

"D'you think we should be happy?"

"No. But what does that matter?"

The words were wrung out of him almost against his will. They surprised her.

"Well, you are a funny chap. Why d'you want to marry me then? The other day you said you couldn't afford it."

"I think I've got about fourteen hundred pounds left. Two can live just as cheaply as one. That'll keep us till I'm qualified and have got through with my hospital appointments, and then I can get an assistantship."

"It means you wouldn't be able to earn anything for six years. We should have about four pounds a week to live on till then, shouldn't we?"

"Not much more than three. There are all my fees to pay."

"And what would you get as an assistant?"

"Three pounds a week."

"D'you mean to say you have to work all that time and spend a small fortune just to earn three pounds a week at the end of it? I don't see that I should be any better off than I am now."

He was silent for a moment.

"D'you mean to say you won't marry me?" he asked hoarsely. "Does my great love mean nothing to you at all?"

"One has to think of oneself in those things, don't one? I shouldn't mind marrying, but I don't want to marry if I'm going to be no better off than what I am now. I don't see the use of it."

"If you cared for me you wouldn't think of all that."

"P'raps not."

He was silent. He drank a glass of wine in order to get rid of the choking in his throat.

"Look at that girl who's just going out," said Mildred. "She got them furs at the Bon Marché at Brixton. I saw them in the window last time I went down there."

Philip smiled grimly.

"What are you laughing at?" she asked. "It's true. And I said to my aunt at the time, I wouldn't buy anything that had been in the window like that, for everyone to know how much you paid for it."

"I can't understand you. You make me frightfully unhappy, and in the next breath you talk rot that has nothing to do with what we're speaking about."

"You are nasty to me," she answered, aggrieved. "I can't help noticing those furs, because I said to my aunt . . . "

"I don't care a damn what you said to your aunt," he interrupted impatiently.

"I wish you wouldn't use bad language when you speak to me Philip. You know I don't like it."

Philip smiled a little, but his eyes were wild. He was silent for a while. He looked at her sullenly. He hated, despised, and loved her.

"If I had an ounce of sense I'd never see you again," he said at last. "If you only knew how heartily I despise myself for loving you!"

"That's not a very nice thing to say to me," she replied sulkily.

"It isn't," he laughed. "Let's go to the Pavilion."

"That's what's so funny in you, you start laughing just when one doesn't expect you to. And if I make you that unhappy why d'you want to take me to the Pavilion? I'm quite ready to go home."

"Merely because I'm less unhappy with you than away from you."

"I should like to know what you really think of me."

He laughed outright.

"My dear, if you did you'd never speak to me again."

LXIII

Philip did not pass the examination in anatomy at the end of March. He and Dunsford had worked at the subject together on Philip's skeleton, asking each other questions till both knew by heart every attachment and the meaning of every nodule and groove on the human bones; but in the examination room Philip was seized with panic, and failed to give right answers to questions from a sudden fear that they might be wrong. He knew he was ploughed and did not even trouble to go up to the building next day to see whether his number was up. The second failure put him definitely among the incompetent and idle men of his year.

He did not care much. He had other things to think of. He told himself that Mildred must have senses like anybody else, it was only a question of awakening them; he had theories about woman, the rip at heart, and thought that there must come a time with everyone when she would yield to persistence. It was a question of watching for the opportunity, keeping his temper, wearing her down with small attentions, taking advantage of the physical exhaustion which opened the heart to tenderness, making himself a refuge from the petty vexations of her work. He talked to her of the relations between his friends in Paris and the fair ladies they admired. The life he described had a charm, an easy gaiety, in which was no grossness. Weaving into his own recollections the adventures of Mimi and Rodolphe, of Musette and the rest of them, he poured into Mildred's ears a story of poverty made picturesque by song and laughter, of lawless love made romantic by beauty and youth. He never attacked her prejudices directly, but sought to combat them by the suggestion that they were suburban. He never let himself be disturbed by her inattention, nor irritated by her indifference. He thought he had bored her. By an effort he made himself affable and entertaining; he never let himself be angry, he never asked for anything, he never complained, he never scolded. When she made engagements and broke them, he met her next day with a smiling face; when she excused herself, he said it did not matter. He never let her see that she pained him. He understood that his passionate grief had wearied her, and he took care to hide every sentiment which could be in the least degree troublesome. He was heroic.

Though she never mentioned the change, for she did not take any conscious notice of it, it affected her nevertheless: she became more confidential with him; she took her little grievances to him, and she always had some grievance against the manageress of the shop, one of her fellow-waitresses, or her aunt; she was talkative enough now, and though she never said anything that was not trivial Philip was never tired of listening to her.

"I like you when you don't want to make love to me," she told him once.

"That's flattering for me," he laughed.

She did not realise how her words made his heart sink nor what an effort it needed for him to answer so lightly.

"Oh, I don't mind your kissing me now and then. It doesn't hurt me and it gives you pleasure."

Occasionally she went so far as to ask him to take her out to dinner, and the offer, coming from her, filled him with rapture.

"I wouldn't do it to anyone else," she said, by way of apology. "But I know I can with you."

"You couldn't give me greater pleasure," he smiled.

She asked him to give her something to eat one evening towards the end of April.

"All right," he said. "Where would you like to go afterwards?"

"Oh, don't let's go anywhere. Let's just sit and talk. You don't mind, do you?"

"Rather not."

He thought she must be beginning to care for him. Three months before the thought of an evening spent in conversation would have bored her to death. It was a fine day, and the spring added to Philip's high spirits. He was content with very little now.

"I say, won't it be ripping when the summer comes along," he said, as they drove along on the top of a 'bus to Soho—she had herself suggested that they should not be so extravagant as to go by cab. "We shall be able to spend every Sunday on the River. We'll take our luncheon in a basket."

She smiled slightly, and he was encouraged to take her hand. She did not withdraw it.

"I really think you're beginning to like me a bit," he smiled.

"You *are* silly, you know I like you, or else I shouldn't be here, should I?"

They were old customers at the little restaurant in Soho by now, and the *patronne* gave them a smile as they came in. The waiter was obsequious.

"Let me order the dinner tonight," said Mildred.

Philip, thinking her more enchanting than ever, gave her the menu, and she chose her favourite dishes. The range was small, and they had eaten many times all that the restaurant could provide. Philip was gay. He looked into her eyes, and he dwelt on every perfection of her pale cheek. When they had finished Mildred by way of exception took a cigarette. She smoked very seldom.

"I don't like to see a lady smoking," she said.

She hesitated a moment and then spoke.

"Were you surprised, my asking you to take me out and give me a bit of dinner tonight?"

"I was delighted."

"I've got something to say to you, Philip."

He looked at her quickly, his heart sank, but he had trained himself well.

"Well, fire away," he said, smiling.

"You're not going to be silly about it, are you? The fact is I'm going to get married."

"Are you?" said Philip.

He could think of nothing else to say. He had considered the possibility often and had imagined to himself what he would do and say. He had suffered agonies when he thought of the despair he would suffer, he had thought of suicide, of the mad passion of anger that would seize him; but perhaps he had too completely anticipated the emotion he would experience, so that now he felt merely exhausted. He felt as one does in a serious illness when the vitality is so low that one is indifferent to the issue and wants only to be left alone.

"You see, I'm getting on," she said. "I'm twenty-four and it's time I settled down."

He was silent. He looked at the *patronne* sitting behind the counter, and his eye dwelt on a red feather one of the diners wore in her hat. Mildred was nettled.

"You might congratulate me," she said.

"I might, mightn't I? I can hardly believe it's true. I've dreamt it so often. It rather tickles me that I should have been so jolly glad that you asked me to take you out to dinner. Whom are you going to marry?"

"Miller," she answered, with a slight blush.

"Miller?" cried Philip, astounded. "But you've not seen him for months."

"He came into lunch one day last week and asked me then.

He's earning very good money. He makes seven pounds a week now and he's got prospects."

Philip was silent again. He remembered that she had always liked Miller; he amused her; there was in his foreign birth an exotic charm which she felt unconsciously.

"I suppose it was inevitable," he said at last. "You were bound to accept the highest bidder. When are you going to marry?"

"On Saturday next. I have given notice."

Philip felt a sudden pang.

"As soon as that?"

"We're going to be married at a registry office. Emil prefers it."

Philip felt dreadfully tired. He wanted to get away from her. He thought he would go straight to bed. He called for the bill.

"I'll put you in a cab and send you down to Victoria. I daresay you won't have to wait long for a train."

"Won't you come with me?"

"I think I'd rather not if you don't mind."

"It's just as you please," she answered haughtily. "I suppose I shall see you at tea-time tomorrow?"

"No, I think we'd better make a full stop now. I don't see why I should go on making myself unhappy. I've paid the cab."

He nodded to her and forced a smile on his lips, then jumped on a 'bus and made his way home. He smoked a pipe before he went to bed, but he could hardly keep his eyes open. He suffered no pain. He fell into a heavy sleep almost as soon as his head touched the pillow.

LXIV

But about three in the morning Philip awoke and could not sleep again. He began to think of Mildred. He tried not to, but could not help himself. He repeated to himself the same thing time after time till his brain reeled. It was inevitable that she should marry: life was hard for a girl who had to earn her own living; and if she found someone who could give her a comfortable home she should not be blamed if she accepted. Philip acknowledged that from her point of view it would have been madness to marry him: only love could have made such poverty bearable, and she did not love him. It was no fault of hers; it was a fact that must be accepted like any other. Philip tried to reason with himself. He told himself that deep down in his heart was mortified pride; his passion had begun in wounded vanity, and it was this at bottom which caused now great part of his wretchedness. He despised himself as much as he despised her. Then he made plans for the future, the same plans over and over again, interrupted by recollections of kisses on her soft pale cheek and by the sound of her voice with its trailing accent; he had a great deal of work to do, since in the summer he was taking Chemistry as well as the two examinations he had failed in. He had separated himself from his friends at the hospital, but now he wanted companionship. There was one happy occurrence: Hayward a fortnight before had written to say that he was passing through London and had asked him to dinner; but Philip, unwilling to be bothered, had refused. He was coming back for the season, and Philip made up his mind to write to him.

He was thankful when eight o'clock struck and he could get up. He was pale and weary. But when he had bathed, dressed, and had breakfast, he felt himself joined up again with the world at large; and his pain was a little easier to bear. He did not feel like going to lectures that morning, but went instead to the Army and Navy Stores to buy Mildred a wedding-present. After much wavering he settled on a dressing-bag. It cost twenty pounds, which was much more than he could afford, but it was showy and vulgar: he knew she would be aware exactly how much it cost; he got a melancholy satisfaction in choosing a gift which would give her pleasure and at the same time indicate for himself the contempt he had for her.

Philip had looked forward with apprehension to the day on which Mildred was to be married; he was expecting an intolerable anguish; and it was with relief that he got a letter from Hayward on Saturday morning to say that he was coming up early on that very day and would fetch Philip to help him to find rooms. Philip, anxious to be distracted, looked up a time-table and discovered the only train Hayward was likely to come by; he went to meet him, and the reunion of the friends was enthusiastic. They left the luggage at the station, and set off gaily. Hayward characteristically proposed that first of all they should go for an hour to the National Gallery; he had not seen pictures for some time, and he stated that it needed a glimpse to set him in tune with life. Philip for months had had no one with whom he could talk of art and books. Since the Paris days Hayward had immersed himself in the modern French versifiers, and, such a plethora of poets is there in France, he had several new geniuses to tell Philip about. They walked through the gallery pointing out to one another their favourite pictures; one subject led to another; they talked excitedly. The sun was shining and the air was warm.

"Let's go and sit in the Park," said Hayward. "We'll look for rooms after luncheon."

The spring was pleasant there. It was a day upon which one felt it good merely to live. The young green of the trees was exquisite against the sky; and the sky, pale and blue, was dappled with little white clouds. At the end of the ornamental water was the gray mass of the Horse Guards. The ordered elegance of the scene had the charm of an eighteenth-century picture. It reminded you not of Watteau, whose landscapes are so idyllic that they recall only the woodland glens seen in dreams, but of the more prosaic Jean-Baptiste Pater. Philip's heart was filled with lightness. He realised, what he had only read before, that art (for there was art in the manner in which he looked upon nature) might liberate the soul from pain.

They went to an Italian restaurant for luncheon and ordered themselves a *fiaschetto* of Chianti. Lingering over the meal they talked on. They reminded one another of the people they had known at Heidelberg, they spoke of Philip's friends in Paris, they talked of books, pictures, morals, life; and suddenly Philip heard a clock strike three. He remembered that by this time Mildred was married. He felt a sort of stitch in his heart, and for a minute or two he could not hear what Hayward was saying. But he filled his glass with Chianti. He was unaccustomed to alcohol and it had gone to his head. For the time at all events he was free from

care. His quick brain had lain idle for so many months that he was intoxicated now with conversation. He was thankful to have someone to talk to who would interest himself in the things that interested him.

"I say, don't let's waste this beautiful day in looking for rooms. I'll put you up to-night. You can look for rooms tomorrow or Monday."

"All right. What shall we do?" answered Hayward.

"Let's get on a penny steamboat and go down to Greenwich."

The idea appealed to Hayward, and they jumped into a cab which took them to Westminster Bridge. They got on the steamboat just as she was starting. Presently Philip, a smile on his lips, spoke.

"I remember when first I went to Paris, Clutton, I think it was, gave a long discourse on the subject that beauty is put into things by painters and poets. They create beauty. In themselves there is nothing to choose between the Campanile of Giotto and a factory chimney. And then beautiful things grow rich with the emotion that they have aroused in succeeding generations. That is why old things are more beautiful than modern. The *Ode to a Grecian Urn* is more lovely now than when it was written, because for a hundred years lovers have read it and the sick at heart taken comfort in its lines."

Philip left Hayward to infer what in the passing scene had suggested these words to him, and it was a delight to know that he could safely leave the inference. It was in sudden reaction from the life he had been leading for so long that he was now deeply affected. The delicate iridescence of the London air gave the softness of a pastel to the gray stone of the buildings; and in the wharves and storehouses there was the severity of grace of a Japanese print. They went further down; and the splendid channel, a symbol of the great empire, broadened, and it was crowded with traffic; Philip thought of the painters and the poets who had made all these things so beautiful, and his heart was filled with gratitude. They came to the Pool of London, and who can describe its majesty? The imagination thrills, and Heaven knows what figures people still its broad stream, Doctor Johnson with Boswell by his side, and old Pepys going on board a man-o'-war: the pageant of English history, and romance, and high adventure. Philip turned to Hayward with shining eyes.

"Dear Charles Dickens," he murmured, smiling a little at his own emotion.

"Aren't you rather sorry you chucked painting?" asked Hayward.

"No."

"I suppose you like doctoring?"

"No, I hate it, but there was nothing else to do. The drudgery of the first two years is awful, and unfortunately I haven't got the scientific temperament."

"Well, you can't go on changing professions."

"Oh, no. I'm going to stick to this. I think I shall like it better when I get into the wards. I have an idea that I'm more interested in people than in anything else in the world. And as far as I can see, it's the only profession in which you have your freedom. You carry your knowledge in your head; with a box of instruments and a few drugs you can make your living anywhere."

"Aren't you going to take a practice then?"

"Not for a good long time at any rate," Philip answered. "As soon as I've got through my hospital appointments I shall get a ship; I want to go to the East—the Malay Archipelago, Siam, China, and all that sort of thing—and then I shall take odd jobs. Something always comes along, cholera duty in India and things like that. I want to go from place to place. I want to see the world. The only way a poor man can do that is by going in for the medical."

They came to Greenwich then. The noble building of Inigo Jones faced the river grandly.

"I say, look, that must be the place where Poor Jack dived into the mud for pennies," said Philip.

They wandered in the park. Ragged children were playing in it, and it was noisy with their cries: here and there old seamen were basking in the sun. There was an air of a hundred years ago.

"It seems a pity you wasted two years in Paris," said Hayward.

"Waste? Look at the movement of that child, look at the pattern which the sun makes on the ground, shining through the trees, look at that sky—why, I should never have seen that sky if I hadn't been to Paris."

Hayward thought that Philip choked a sob, and he looked at him with astonishment.

"What's the matter with you?"

"Nothing. I'm sorry to be so damned emotional, but for six months I've been starved for beauty."

"You used to be so matter of fact. It's very interesting to hear you say that."

"Damn it all, I don't want to be interesting," laughed Philip. "Let's go and have a stodgy tea."

LXV

Hayward's visit did Philip a great deal of good. Each day his thoughts dwelt less on Mildred. He looked back upon the past with disgust. He could not understand how he had submitted to the dishonour of such a love; and when he thought of Mildred it was with angry hatred, because she had submitted him to so much humiliation. His imagination presented her to him now with her defects of person and manner exaggerated, so that he shuddered at the thought of having been connected with her.

"It just shows how damned weak I am," he said to himself. The adventure was like a blunder that one had committed at a party so horrible that one felt nothing could be done to excuse it: the only remedy was to forget. His horror at the degradation he had suffered helped him. He was like a snake casting its skin and he looked upon the old covering with nausea. He exulted in the possession of himself once more; he realised how much of the delight of the world he had lost when he was absorbed in that madness which they called love; he had had enough of it; he did not want to be in love any more if love was that. Philip told Hayward something of what he had gone through.

"Wasn't it Sophocles," he asked, "who prayed for the time when he would be delivered from the wild beast of passion that devoured his heart-strings?"

Philip seemed really to be born again. He breathed the circumambient air as though he had never breathed it before, and he took a child's pleasure in all the facts of the world. He called his period of insanity six months' hard labour.

Hayward had only been settled in London a few days when Philip received from Blackstable, where it had been sent, a card for a private view at some picture gallery. He took Hayward, and, on looking at the catalogue, saw that Lawson had a picture in it.

"I suppose he sent the card," said Philip. "Let's go and find him, he's sure to be in front of his picture."

This, a profile of Ruth Chalice, was tucked away in a corner, and Lawson was not far from it. He looked a little lost, in his large soft hat and loose, pale clothes, amongst the fashionable throng that had gathered for the private view. He greeted Philip with enthusiasm, and with his usual volubility told him

that he had come to live in London, Ruth Chalice was a hussy, he had taken a studio, Paris was played out, he had a commission for a portrait, and they'd better dine together and have a good old talk. Philip reminded him of his acquaintance with Hayward, and was entertained to see that Lawson was slightly awed by Hayward's elegant clothes and grand manner. They sat upon him better than they had done in the shabby little studio which Lawson and Philip had shared.

At dinner Lawson went on with his news. Flanagan had gone back to America. Clutton had disappeared. He had come to the conclusion that a man had no chance of doing anything so long as he was in contact with art and artists: the only thing was to get right away. To make the step easier he had quarrelled with all his friends in Paris. He developed a talent for telling them home truths, which made them bear with fortitude his declaration that he had done with that city and was settling in Gerona, a little town in the north of Spain which had attracted him when he saw it from the train on his way to Barcelona. He was living there now alone.

"I wonder if he'll ever do any good," said Philip.

He was interested in the human side of that struggle to express something which was so obscure in the man's mind that he was become morbid and querulous. Philip felt vaguely that he was himself in the same case, but with him it was the conduct of his life as a whole that perplexed him. That was his means of self-expression, and what he must do with it was not clear. But he had no time to continue with this train of thought, for Lawson poured out a frank recital of his affair with Ruth Chalice. She had left him for a young student who had just come from England, and was behaving in a scandalous fashion. Lawson really thought someone ought to step in and save the young man. She would ruin him. Philip gathered that Lawson's chief grievance was that the rupture had come in the middle of a portrait he was painting.

"Women have no real feeling for art," he said. "They only pretend they have." But he finished philosophically enough: "However, I got four portraits out of her, and I'm not sure if the last I was working on would ever have been a success."

Philip envied the easy way in which the painter managed his love-affairs. He had passed eighteen months pleasantly enough, had got an excellent model for nothing, and had parted from her at the end with no great pang.

"And what about Cronshaw?" asked Philip.

"Oh, he's done for," answered Lawson, with the cheerful callous-

ness of his youth. "He'll be dead in six months. He got pneumonia last winter. He was in the English hospital for seven weeks, and when he came out they told him his only chance was to give up liquor."

"Poor devil," smiled the abstemious Philip.

"He kept off for a bit. He used to go to the Lilas all the same, he couldn't keep away from that, but he used to drink hot milk, *avec de la fleur d'oranger,* and he was damned dull."

"I take it you did not conceal the fact from him."

"Oh, he knew it himself. A little while ago he started on whiskey again. He said he was too old to turn over any new leaves. He would rather be happy for six months and die at the end of it than linger on for five years. And then I think he's been awfully hard up lately. You see, he didn't earn anything while he was ill, and the slut he lives with has been giving him a rotten time."

"I remember, the first time I saw him I admired him awfully," said Philip. "I thought he was wonderful. It is sickening that vulgar, middle-class virtue should pay."

"Of course he was a rotter. He was bound to end in the gutter sooner or later," said Lawson.

Philip was hurt because Lawson would not see the pity of it. Of course it was cause and effect, but in the necessity with which one follows the other lay all tragedy of life.

"Oh, I'd forgotten," said Lawson. "Just after you left he sent round a present for you. I thought you'd be coming back and I didn't bother about it, and then I didn't think it worth sending on; but it'll come over to London with the rest of my things, and you can come to my studio one day and fetch it away if you want it."

"You haven't told me what it is yet."

"Oh, it's only a ragged little bit of carpet. I shouldn't think it's worth anything. I asked him one day what the devil he'd sent the filthy thing for. He told me he'd seen it in a shop in the Rue de Rennes and bought it for fifteen francs. It appears to be a Persian rug. He said you'd asked him the meaning of life and that was the answer. But he was very drunk."

Philip laughed.

"Oh yes, I know. I'll take it. It was a favourite wheeze of his. He said I must find out for myself, or else the answer meant nothing."

LXVI

PHILIP worked well and easily; he had a good deal to do, since he was taking in July the three parts of the First Conjoint examination, two of which he had failed in before; but he found life pleasant. He made a new friend. Lawson, on the look out for models, had discovered a girl who was understudying at one of the theatres, and in order to induce her to sit to him arranged a little luncheon-party one Sunday. She brought a chaperon with her; and to her Philip, asked to make a fourth, was instructed to confine his attentions. He found this easy, since she turned out to be an agreeable chatterbox with an amusing tongue. She asked Philip to go and see her; she had rooms in Vincent Square, and was always in to tea at five o'clock; he went, was delighted with his welcome, and went again. Mrs. Nesbit was not more than twenty-five, very small, with a pleasant, ugly face; she had very bright eyes, high cheek bones, and a large mouth: the excessive contrasts of her colouring reminded one of a portrait by one of the modern French painters; her skin was very white, her cheeks were very red, her thick eyebrows, her hair, were very black. The effect was odd, a little unnatural, but far from unpleasing. She was separated from her husband and earned her living and her child's by writing penny novelettes. There were one or two publishers who made a speciality of that sort of thing, and she had as much work as she could do. It was ill-paid, she received fifteen pounds for a story of thirty thousand words; but she was satisfied.

"After all, it only costs the reader twopence," she said, "and they like the same thing over and over again. I just change the names and that's all. When I'm bored I think of the washing and the rent and clothes for baby, and I go on again."

Besides, she walked on at various theatres where they wanted supers and earned by this when in work from sixteen shillings to a guinea a week. At the end of her day she was so tired that she slept like a top. She made the best of her difficult lot. Her keen sense of humour enabled her to get amusement out of every vexatious circumstance. Sometimes things went wrong, and she found herself with no money at all; then her trifling possessions found their way to a pawnshop in the Vauxhall Bridge Road, and she ate bread and butter till things grew brighter. She never lost her cheerfulness.

Philip was interested in her shiftless life, and she made him laugh with the fantastic narration of her struggles. He asked her why she did not try her hand at literary work of a better sort, but she knew that she had no talent, and the abominable stuff she turned out by the thousand words was not only tolerably paid, but was the best she could do. She had nothing to look forward to but a continuation of the life she led. She seemed to have no relations, and her friends were as poor as herself.

"I don't think of the future," she said. "As long as I have enough money for three weeks' rent and a pound or two over for food I never bother. Life wouldn't be worth living if I worried over the future as well as the present. When things are at their worst I find something always happens."

Soon Philip grew in the habit of going in to tea with her every day, and so that his visits might not embarrass her he took in a cake or a pound of butter or some tea. They started to call one another by their Christian names. Feminine sympathy was new to him, and he delighted in someone who gave a willing ear to all his troubles. The hours went quickly. He did not hide his admiration for her. She was a delightful companion. He could not help comparing her with Mildred; and he contrasted with the one's obstinate stupidity, which refused interest to everything she did not know, the other's quick appreciation and ready intelligence. His heart sank when he thought that he might have been tied for life to such a woman as Mildred. One evening he told Norah the whole story of his love. It was not one to give him much reason for self-esteem, and it was very pleasant to receive such charming sympathy.

"I think you're well out of it," she said, when he had finished.

She had a funny way at times of holding her head on one side like an Aberdeen puppy. She was sitting in an upright chair, sewing, for she had no time to do nothing, and Philip had made himself comfortable at her feet.

"I can't tell you how heartily thankful I am it's all over," he sighed.

"Poor thing, you must have had a rotten time," she murmured, and by way of showing her sympathy put her hand on his shoulder.

He took it and kissed it, but she withdrew it quickly.

"Why did you do that?" she asked, with a blush.

"Have you any objection?"

She looked at him for a moment with twinkling eyes, and she smiled.

"No," she said.

He got up on his knees and faced her. She looked into his eyes steadily, and her large mouth trembled with a smile.

"Well?" she said.

"You know, you are a ripper. I'm so grateful to you for being nice to me. I like you so much."

"Don't be idiotic," she said.

Philip took hold of her elbows and drew her towards him. She made no resistance, but bent forward a little, and he kissed her red lips.

"Why did you do that?" she asked again.

"Because it's comfortable."

She did not answer, but a tender look came into her eyes, and she passed her hand softly over his hair.

"You know, it's awfully silly of you to behave like this. We were such good friends. It would be so jolly to leave it at that."

"If you really want to appeal to my better nature," replied Philip, "you'll do well not to stroke my cheek while you're doing it."

She gave a little chuckle, but she did not stop.

"It's very wrong of me, isn't it?" she said.

Philip, surprised and a little amused, looked into her eyes, and as he looked he saw them soften and grow liquid, and there was an expression in them that enchanted him. His heart was suddenly stirred, and tears came to his eyes.

"Norah, you're not fond of me, are you?" he asked, incredulously.

"You clever boy, you ask such stupid questions."

"Oh, my dear, it never struck me that you could be."

He flung his arms round her and kissed her, while she, laughing, blushing, and crying, surrendered herself willingly to his embrace.

Presently he released her and sitting back on his heels looked at her curiously.

"Well, I'm blowed!" he said.

"Why?"

"I'm so surprised."

"And pleased?"

"Delighted," he cried with all his heart, "and so proud and so happy and so grateful."

He took her hands and covered them with kisses. This was the beginning for Philip of a happiness which seemed both solid and durable. They became lovers but remained friends. There was in Norah a maternal instinct which received satisfaction in her love for Philip; she wanted someone to pet, and scold, and make a

fuss of; she had a domestic temperament and found pleasure in looking after his health and his linen. She pitied his deformity, over which he was so sensitive, and her pity expressed itself instinctively in tenderness. She was young, strong, and healthy, and it seemed quite natural to her to give her love. She had high spirits and a merry soul. She liked Philip because he laughed with her at all the amusing things in life that caught her fancy, and above all she liked him because he was he.

When she told him this he answered gaily:

"Nonsense. You like me because I'm a silent person and never want to get a word in."

Philip did not love her at all. He was extremely fond of her, glad to be with her, amused and interested by her conversation. She restored his belief in himself and put healing ointments, as it were, on all the bruises of his soul. He was immensely flattered that she cared for him. He admired her courage, her optimism, her impudent defiance of fate; she had a little philosophy of her own, ingenuous and practical.

"You know, I don't believe in churches and parsons and all that," she said, "but I believe in God, and I don't believe He minds much about what you do as long as you keep your end up and help a lame dog over a stile when you can. And I think people on the whole are very nice, and I'm sorry for those who aren't."

"And what about afterwards?" asked Philip.

"Oh, well, I don't know for certain, you know," she smiled, "but I hope for the best. And anyhow there'll be no rent to pay and no novelettes to write."

She had a feminine gift for delicate flattery. She thought that Philip did a brave thing when he left Paris because he was conscious he could not be a great artist; and he was enchanted when she expressed enthusiastic admiration for him. He had never been quite certain whether this action indicated courage or infirmity of purpose. It was delightful to realise that she considered it heroic. She ventured to tackle him on a subject which his friends instinctively avoided.

"It's very silly of you to be so sensitive about your club-foot," she said. She saw him flush darkly, but went on. "You know, people don't think about it nearly as much as you do. They notice it the first time they see you, and then they forget about it."

He would not answer.

"You're not angry with me, are you?"

"No."

She put her arm round his neck.

"You know, I only speak about it because I love you. I don't want it to make you unhappy."

"I think you can say anything you choose to me," he answered, smiling. "I wish I could do something to show you how grateful I am to you."

She took him in hand in other ways. She would not let him be bearish and laughed at him when he was out of temper. She made him more urbane.

"You can make me do anything you like," he said to her once.

"D'you mind?"

"No, I want to do what you like."

He had the sense to realise his happiness. It seemed to him that she gave him all that a wife could, and he preserved his freedom; she was the most charming friend he had ever had, with a sympathy that he had never found in a man. The sexual relationship was no more than the strongest link in their friendship. It completed it, but was not essential. And because Philip's appetites were satisfied, he became more equable and easier to live with. He felt in complete possession of himself. He thought sometimes of the winter, during which he had been obsessed by a hideous passion, and he was filled with loathing for Mildred and with horror of himself.

His examinations were approaching, and Norah was as interested in them as he. He was flattered and touched by her eagerness. She made him promise to come at once and tell her the result. He passed the three parts this time without mishap, and when he went to tell her she burst into tears.

"Oh, I'm so glad, I was so anxious."

"You silly little thing," he laughed, but he was choking.

No one could help being pleased with the way she took it.

"And what are you going to do now?" she asked.

"I can take a holiday with a clear conscience. I have no work to do till the winter session begins in October."

"I suppose you'll go down to your uncle's at Blackstable?"

"You suppose quite wrong. I'm going to stay in London and play with you."

"I'd rather you went away."

"Why? Are you tired of me?"

She laughed and put her hands on his shoulders.

"Because you've been working hard, and you look utterly washed out. You want some fresh air and a rest. Please go."

He did not answer for a moment. He looked at her with loving eyes.

"You know, I'd never believe it of anyone but you. You're only thinking of my good. I wonder what you see in me."

"Will you give me a good character with my month's notice?" she laughed gaily.

"I'll say that you're thoughtful and kind, and you're not exacting; you never worry, you're not troublesome, and you're easy to please."

"All that's nonsense," she said, "but I'll tell you one thing: I'm one of the few persons I ever met who are able to learn from experience."

LXVII

Philip looked forward to his return to London with impatience. During the two months he spent at Blackstable Norah wrote to him frequently, long letters in a bold, large hand, in which with cheerful humour she described the little events of the daily round, the domestic troubles of her landlady, rich food for laughter, the comic vexations of her rehearsals—she was walking on in an important spectacle at one of the London theatres—and her odd adventures with the publishers of novelettes. Philip read a great deal, bathed, played tennis, and sailed. At the beginning of October he settled down in London to work for the Second Conjoint examination. He was eager to pass it, since that ended the drudgery of the curriculum; after it was done with the student became an out-patients' clerk, and was brought in contact with men and women as well as with text-books. Philip saw Norah every day.

Lawson had been spending the summer at Poole, and had a number of sketches to show of the harbour and of the beach. He had a couple of commissions for portraits and proposed to stay in London till the bad light drove him away. Hayward, in London too, intended to spend the winter abroad, but remained week after week from sheer inability to make up his mind to go. Hayward had run to fat during the last two or three years—it was five years since Philip first met him in Heidelberg—and he was prematurely bald. He was very sensitive about it and wore his hair long to conceal the unsightly patch on the crown of his head. His only consolation was that his brow was now very noble. His blue eyes had lost their colour; they had a listless droop; and his mouth, losing the fulness of youth, was weak and pale. He still talked vaguely of the things he was going to do in the future, but with less conviction; and he was conscious that his friends no longer believed in him: when he had drunk two or three glasses of whiskey he was inclined to be elegiac.

"I'm a failure," he murmured, "I'm unfit for the brutality of the struggle of life. All I can do is to stand aside and let the vulgar throng hustle by in their pursuit of the good things."

He gave you the impression that to fail was a more delicate, a more exquisite thing, than to succeed. He insinuated that his aloofness was due to distaste for all that was common and low. He talked beautifully of Plato.

"I should have thought you'd got through with Plato by now," said Philip impatiently.

"Would you?" he asked, raising his eyebrows.

He was not inclined to pursue the subject. He had discovered of late the effective dignity of silence.

"I don't see the use of reading the same thing over and over again," said Philip. "That's only a laborious form of idleness."

"But are you under the impression that you have so great a mind that you can understand the most profound writer at a first reading?"

"I don't want to understand him, I'm not a critic. I'm not interested in him for his sake but for mine."

"Why d'you read then?"

"Partly for pleasure, because it's a habit and I'm just as uncomfortable if I don't read as if I don't smoke, and partly to know myself. When I read a book I seem to read it with my eyes only, but now and then I come across a passage, perhaps only a phrase, which has a meaning for *me,* and it becomes part of me; I've got out of the book all that's any use to me, and I can't get anything more if I read it a dozen times. You see, it seems to me, one's like a closed bud, and most of what one reads and does has no effect at all; but there are certain things that have a peculiar significance for one, and they open a petal; and the petals open one by one; and at last the flower is there."

Philip was not satisfied with his metaphor, but he did not know how else to explain a thing which he felt and yet was not clear about.

"You want to do things, you want to become things," said Hayward, with a shrug of the shoulders. "It's so vulgar."

Philip knew Hayward very well by now. He was weak and vain, so vain that you had to be on the watch constantly not to hurt his feelings; he mingled idleness and idealism so that he could not separate them. At Lawson's studio one day he met a journalist, who was charmed by his conversation, and a week later the editor of a paper wrote to suggest that he should do some criticism for him. For forty-eight hours Hayward lived in an agony of indecision. He had talked of getting occupation of this sort so long that he had not the face to refuse outright, but the thought of doing anything filled him with panic. At last he declined the offer and breathed freely.

"It would have interfered with my work," he told Philip.

"What work?" asked Philip brutally.

"My inner life," he answered.

Then he went on to say beautiful things about Amiel, the professor of Geneva, whose brilliancy promised achievement which was never fulfilled; till at his death the reason of his failure and the excuse were at once manifest in the minute, wonderful journal which was found among his papers. Hayward smiled enigmatically.

But Hayward could still talk delightfully about books; his taste was exquisite and his discrimination elegant; and he had a constant interest in ideas, which made him an entertaining companion. They meant nothing to him really, since they never had any effect on him; but he treated them as he might have pieces of china in an auction-room, handling them with pleasure in their shape and their glaze, pricing them in his mind; and then, putting them back into their case, thought of them no more.

And it was Hayward who made a momentous discovery. One evening, after due preparation, he took Philip and Lawson to a tavern situated in Beak Street, remarkable not only in itself and for its history—it had memories of eighteenth-century glories which excited the romantic imagination—but for its snuff, which was the best in London, and above all for its punch. Hayward led them into a large, long room, dingily magnificent, with huge pictures on the walls of nude women: they were vast allegories of the school of Haydon; but smoke, gas, and the London atmosphere had given them a richness which made them look like old masters. The dark panelling, the massive, tarnished gold of the cornice, the mahogany tables, gave the room an air of sumptuous comfort, and the leather-covered seats along the wall were soft and easy. There was a ram's head on a table opposite the door, and this contained the celebrated snuff. They ordered punch. They drank it. It was hot rum punch. The pen falters when it attempts to treat of the excellence thereof; the sober vocabulary, the sparse epithet of this narrative, are inadequate to the task; and pompous terms, jewelled, exotic phrases rise to the excited fancy. It warmed the blood and cleared the head; it filled the soul with well-being; it disposed the mind at once to utter wit and to appreciate the wit of others; it had the vagueness of music and the precision of mathematics. Only one of its qualities was comparable to anything else: it had the warmth of a good heart; but its taste, its smell, its feel, were not to be described in words. Charles Lamb, with his infinite tact, attempting to, might have drawn charming pictures of the life of his day; Lord Byron in a stanza of Don Juan, aiming at the impossible, might have achieved the sublime; Oscar Wilde, heaping jewels of Ispahan upon brocades of Byzantium, might have created a troubling beauty. Considering it, the mind

reeled under visions of the feasts of Elagabalus; and the subtle harmonies of Debussy mingled with the musty, fragrant romance of chests in which have been kept old clothes, ruffs, hose, doublets, of a forgotten generation, and the wan odour of lilies of the valley and the savour of Cheddar cheese.

Hayward discovered the tavern at which this priceless beverage was to be obtained by meeting in the street a man called Macalister who had been at Cambridge with him. He was a stockbroker and a philosopher. He was accustomed to go to the tavern once a week; and soon Philip, Lawson, and Hayward got into the habit of meeting there every Tuesday evening: change of manners made it now little frequented, which was an advantage to persons who took pleasure in conversation. Macalister was a big-boned fellow, much too short for his width, with a large, fleshy face and a soft voice. He was a student of Kant and judged everything from the standpoint of pure reason. He was fond of expounding his doctrines. Philip listened with excited interest. He had long come to the conclusion that nothing amused him more than metaphysics, but he was not so sure of their efficacy in the affairs of life. The neat little system which he had formed as the result of his meditations at Blackstable had not been of conspicuous use during his infatuation for Mildred. He could not be positive that reason was much help in the conduct of life. It seemed to him that life lived itself. He remembered very vividly the violence of the emotion which had possessed him and his inability, as if he were tied down to the ground with ropes, to react against it. He read many wise things in books, but he could only judge from his own experience; (he did not know whether he was different from other people;) he did not calculate the pros and cons of an action, the benefits which must befall him if he did it, the harm which might result from the omission; but his whole being was urged on irresistibly. He did not act with a part of himself but altogether. The power that possessed him seemed to have nothing to do with reason: all that reason did was to point out the methods of obtaining what his whole soul was striving for.

Macalister reminded him of the Categorical Imperative.

"Act so that every action of yours should be capable of becoming a universal rule of action for all men."

"That seems to me perfect nonsense," said Philip.

"You're a bold man to say that of anything stated by Emanuel Kant," retorted Macalister.

"Why? Reverence for what somebody said is a stultifying quality: there's a damned sight too much reverence in the world.

Kant thought things not because they were true, but because he was Kant."

"Well, what is your objection to the Categorical Imperative?"

(They talked as though the fate of empires were in the balance.)

"It suggests that one can choose one's course by an effort of will. And it suggests that reason is the surest guide. Why should its dictates be any better than those of passion? They're different. That's all."

"You seem to be a contented slave of your passions."

"A slave because I can't help myself, but not a contented one," laughed Philip.

While he spoke he thought of that hot madness which had driven him in pursuit of Mildred. He remembered how he had chafed against it and how he had felt the degradation of it.

"Thank God, I'm free from all that now," he thought.

And yet even as he said it he was not quite sure whether he spoke sincerely. When he was under the influence of passion he had felt a singular vigour, and his mind had worked with unwonted force. He was more alive, there was an excitement in sheer being, an eager vehemence of soul, which made life now a trifle dull. For all the misery he had endured there was a compensation in that sense of rushing, overwhelming existence.

But Philip's unlucky words engaged him in a discussion on the freedom of the will, and Macalister, with his well-stored memory, brought out argument after argument. He had a mind that delighted in dialectics, and he forced Philip to contradict himself; he pushed him into corners from which he could only escape by damaging concessions; he tripped him up with logic and battered him with authorities.

At last Philip said:

"Well, I can't say anything about other people. I can only speak for myself. The illusion of free will is so strong in my mind that I can't get away from it, but I believe it is only an illusion. But it is an illusion which is one of the strongest motives of my actions. Before I do anything I feel that I have choice; and that influences what I do; but afterwards, when the thing is done, I believe that it was inevitable from all eternity."

"What do you deduce from that?" asked Hayward.

"Why, merely the futility of regret. It's no good crying over spilt milk, because all the forces of the universe were bent on spilling it."

LXVIII

One morning Philip on getting up felt his head swim, and going back to bed suddenly discovered he was ill. All his limbs ached and he shivered with cold. When the landlady brought in his breakfast he called to her through the open door that he was not well, and asked for a cup of tea and a piece of toast. A few minutes later there was a knock at his door, and Griffiths came in. They had lived in the same house for over a year, but had never done more than nod to one another in the passage.

"I say, I hear you're seedy," said Griffiths. "I thought I'd come in and see what was the matter with you."

Philip, blushing he knew not why, made light of the whole thing. He would be all right in an hour or two.

"Well, you'd better let me take your temperature," said Griffiths.

"It's quite unnecessary," answered Philip irritably.

"Come on."

Philip put the thermometer in his mouth. Griffiths sat on the side of the bed and chatted brightly for a moment, then he took it out and looked at it.

"Now, look here, old man, you must stay in bed, and I'll bring old Deacon in to have a look at you."

"Nonsense," said Philip. "There's nothing the matter. I wish you wouldn't bother about me."

"But it isn't any bother. You've got a temperature and you must stay in bed. You will, won't you?"

There was a peculiar charm in his manner, a mingling of gravity and kindliness, which was infinitely attractive.

"You've got a wonderful bed-side manner," Philip murmured, closing his eyes with a smile.

Griffiths shook out his pillow for him, deftly smoothed down the bed-clothes, and tucked him up. He went into Philip's sitting-room to look for a siphon, could not find one, and fetched it from his own room. He drew down the blind.

"Now, go to sleep and I'll bring the old man round as soon as he's done the wards."

It seemed hours before anyone came to Philip. His head felt as if it would split, anguish rent his limbs, and he was afraid he was going to cry. Then there was a knock at the door and Griffiths, healthy, strong, and cheerful, came in.

"Here's Doctor Deacon," he said.

The physician stepped forward, an elderly man with a bland manner, whom Philip knew only by sight. A few questions, a brief examination, and the diagnosis.

"What d'you make it?" he asked Griffiths, smiling.

"Influenza."

"Quite right."

Doctor Deacon looked round the dingy lodging-house room.

"Wouldn't you like to go to the hospital? They'll put you in a private ward, and you can be better looked after than you can here."

"I'd rather stay where I am," said Philip.

He did not want to be disturbed, and he was always shy of new surroundings. He did not fancy nurses fussing about him, and the dreary cleanliness of the hospital.

"I can look after him, sir," said Griffiths at once.

"Oh, very well."

He wrote a prescription, gave instructions, and left.

"Now you've got to do exactly as I tell you," said Griffiths. "I'm day-nurse and night-nurse all in one."

"It's very kind of you, but I shan't want anything," said Philip.

Griffiths put his hand on Philip's forehead, a large cool, dry hand, and the touch seemed to him good.

"I'm just going to take this round to the dispensary to have it made up, and then I'll come back."

In a little while he brought the medicine and gave Philip a dose. Then he went upstairs to fetch his books.

"You won't mind my working in your room this afternoon, will you?" he said, when he came down. "I'll leave the door open so that you can give me a shout if you want anything."

Later in the day Philip, awaking from an uneasy doze, heard voices in his sitting-room. A friend had come in to see Griffiths.

"I say, you'd better not come in tonight," he heard Griffiths saying.

And then a minute or two afterwards someone else entered the room and expressed his surprise at finding Griffiths there. Philip heard him explain.

"I'm looking after a second year's man who's got these rooms. The wretched blighter's down with influenza. No whist tonight, old man."

Presently Griffiths was left alone and Philip called him.

"I say, you're not putting off a party tonight, are you?" he asked.

"Not on your account. I must work at my surgery."

"Don't put it off. I shall be all right. You needn't bother about me."

"That's all right."

Philip grew worse. As the night came on he became slightly delirious, but towards morning he awoke from a restless sleep. He saw Griffiths get out of an arm-chair, go down on his knees, and with his fingers put piece after piece of coal on the fire. He was in pyjamas and a dressing-gown.

"What are you doing here?" he asked.

"Did I wake you up? I tried to make up the fire without making a row."

"Why aren't you in bed? What's the time?"

"About five. I thought I'd better sit up with you tonight. I brought an arm-chair in as I thought if I put a mattress down I should sleep so soundly that I shouldn't hear you if you wanted anything."

"I wish you wouldn't be so good to me," groaned Philip. "Suppose you catch it?"

"Then you shall nurse me, old man," said Griffiths, with a laugh.

In the morning Griffiths drew up the blind. He looked pale and tired after his night's watch, but was full of spirits.

"Now, I'm going to wash you," he said to Philip cheerfully.

"I can wash myself," said Philip, ashamed.

"Nonsense. If you were in the small ward a nurse would wash you, and I can do it just as well as a nurse."

Philip, too weak and wretched to resist, allowed Griffiths to wash his hands and face, his feet, his chest and back. He did it with charming tenderness, carrying on meanwhile a stream of friendly chatter; then he changed the sheet just as they did at the hospital, shook out the pillow, and arranged the bed-clothes.

"I should like Sister Arthur to see me. It would make her sit up. Deacon's coming in to see you early."

"I can't imagine why you should be so good to me," said Philip.

"It's good practice for me. It's rather a lark having a patient."

Griffiths gave him his breakfast and went off to get dressed and have something to eat. A few minutes before ten he came back with a bunch of grapes and a few flowers.

"You are awfully kind," said Philip.

He was in bed for five days.

Norah and Griffiths nursed him between them. Though Griffiths

was the same age as Philip he adopted towards him a humorous, motherly attitude. He was a thoughtful fellow, gentle and encouraging; but his greatest quality was a vitality which seemed to give health to everyone with whom he came in contact. Philip was unused to the petting which most people enjoy from mothers or sisters and he was deeply touched by the feminine tenderness of this strong young man. Philip grew better. Then Griffiths, sitting idly in Philip's room, amused him with gay stories of amorous adventure. He was a flirtatious creature, capable of carrying on three or four affairs at a time; and his account of the devices he was forced to in order to keep out of difficulties made excellent hearing. He had a gift for throwing a romantic glamour over everything that happened to him. He was crippled with debts, everything he had of any value was pawned, but he managed always to be cheerful, extravagant, and generous. He was the adventurer by nature. He loved people of doubtful occupations and shifty purposes; and his acquaintance among the riff-raff that frequents the bars of London was enormous. Loose women, treating him as a friend, told him the troubles, difficulties, and successes of their lives; and card-sharpers, respecting his impecuniosity, stood him dinners and lent him five-pound notes. He was ploughed in his examinations time after time; but he bore this cheerfully, and submitted with such a charming grace to the parental expostulations that his father, a doctor in practice at Leeds, had not the heart to be seriously angry with him.

"I'm an awful fool at books," he said cheerfully, "but I *can't* work."

Life was much too jolly. But it was clear that when he had got through the exuberance of his youth, and was at last qualified, he would be a tremendous success in practice. He would cure people by the sheer charm of his manner.

Philip worshipped him as at school he had worshipped boys who were tall and straight and high of spirits. By the time he was well they were fast friends, and it was a peculiar satisfaction to Philip that Griffiths seemed to enjoy sitting in his little parlour, wasting Philip's time with his amusing chatter and smoking innumerable cigarettes. Philip took him sometimes to the tavern off Regent Street. Hayward found him stupid, but Lawson recognised his charm and was eager to paint him; he was a picturesque figure with his blue eyes, white skin, and curly hair. Often they discussed things he knew nothing about, and then he sat quietly, with a good-natured smile on his handsome face, feeling quite rightly that his presence was sufficient contribution to the

entertainment of the company. When he discovered that Macalister was a stockbroker he was eager for tips; and Macalister, with his grave smile, told him what fortunes he could have made if he had bought certain stock at certain times. It made Philip's mouth water, for in one way and another he was spending more than he had expected, and it would have suited him very well to make a little money by the easy method Macalister suggested.

"Next time I hear of a really good thing I'll let you know," said the stockbroker. "They do come along sometimes. It's only a matter of biding one's time."

Philip could not help thinking how delightful it would be to make fifty pounds, so that he could give Norah the furs she so badly needed for the winter. He looked at the shops in Regent Street and picked out the articles he could buy for the money. She deserved everything. She made his life very happy.

LXIX

One afternoon, when he went back to his rooms from the hospital to wash and tidy himself before going to tea as usual with Norah, as he let himself in with his latch-key, his landlady opened the door for him.

"There's a lady waiting to see you," she said.

"Me?" exclaimed Philip.

He was surprised. It would only be Norah, and he had no idea what had brought her.

"I shouldn't 'ave let her in, only she's been three times, and she seemed that upset at not finding you, so I told her she could wait."

He pushed past the explaining landlady and burst into the room. His heart turned sick. It was Mildred. She was sitting down, but got up hurriedly as he came in. She did not move towards him nor speak. He was so surprised that he did not know what he was saying.

"What the hell d'you want?" he asked.

She did not answer, but began to cry. She did not put her hands to her eyes, but kept them hanging by the side of her body. She looked like a housemaid applying for a situation. There was a dreadful humility in her bearing. Philip did not know what feelings came over him. He had a sudden impulse to turn round and escape from the room.

"I didn't think I'd ever see you again," he said at last.

"I wish I was dead," she moaned.

Philip left her standing where she was. He could only think at the moment of steadying himself. His knees were shaking. He looked at her, and he groaned in despair.

"What's the matter?" he said.

"He's left me—Emil."

Philip's heart bounded. He knew then that he loved her as passionately as ever. He had never ceased to love her. She was standing before him humble and unresisting. He wished to take her in his arms and cover her tear-stained face with kisses. Oh, how long the separation had been! He did not know how he could have endured it.

"You'd better sit down. Let me give you a drink."

He drew the chair near the fire and she sat in it. He mixed her whiskey and soda, and, sobbing still, she drank it. She looked at him with great, mournful eyes. There were large black lines under them. She was thinner and whiter than when last he had seen her.

"I wish I'd married you when you asked me," she said.

Philip did not know why the remark seemed to swell his heart. He could not keep the distance from her which he had forced upon himself. He put his hand on her shoulder.

"I'm awfully sorry you're in trouble."

She leaned her head against his bosom and burst into hysterical crying. Her hat was in the way and she took it off. He had never dreamt that she was capable of crying like that. He kissed her again and again. It seemed to ease her a little.

"You were always good to me, Philip," she said. "That's why I knew I could come to you."

"Tell me what's happened."

"Oh, I can't, I can't," she cried out, breaking away from him.

He sank down on his knees beside her and put his cheek against hers.

"Don't you know that there's nothing you can't tell me? I can never blame you for anything."

She told him the story little by little, and sometimes she sobbed so much that he could hardly understand.

"Last Monday week he went up to Birmingham, and he promised to be back on Thursday, and he never came, and he didn't come on the Friday, so I wrote to ask what was the matter, and he never answered the letter. And I wrote and said that if I didn't hear from him by return I'd go up to Birmingham, and this morning I got a solicitor's letter to say I had no claim on him, and if I molested him he'd seek the protection of the law."

"But it's absurd," cried Philip. "A man can't treat his wife like that. Had you had a row?"

"Oh, yes, we'd had a quarrel on the Sunday, and he said he was sick of me, but he'd said it before, and he'd come back all right. I didn't think he meant it. He was frightened, because I told him a baby was coming. I kept it from him as long as I could. Then I had to tell him. He said it was my fault, and I ought to have known better. If you'd only heard the things he said to me! But I found out precious quick that he wasn't a gentleman. He left me without a penny. He hadn't paid the rent, and I hadn't got the money to pay it, and the woman who kept the house said such things to me—well, I might have been a thief the way she talked."

"I thought you were going to take a flat."

"That's what he said, but we just took furnished apartments in Highbury. He was that mean. He said I was extravagant, he didn't give me anything to be extravagant with."

She had an extraordinary way of mixing the trivial with the important. Philip was puzzled. The whole thing was incomprehensible.

"No man could be such a blackguard."

"You don't know him. I wouldn't go back to him now not if he was to come and ask me on his bended knees. I was a fool ever to think of him. And he wasn't earning the money he said he was. The lies he told me!"

Philip thought for a minute or two. He was so deeply moved by her distress that he could not think of himself.

"Would you like me to go to Birmingham? I could see him and try to make things up."

"Oh, there's no chance of that. He'll never come back now, I know him."

"But he must provide for you. He can't get out of that. I don't know anything about these things, you'd better go and see a solicitor."

"How can I? I haven't got the money."

"I'll pay all that. I'll write a note to my own solicitor, the sportsman who was my father's executor. Would you like me to come with you now? I expect he'll still be at his office."

"No, give me a letter to him. I'll go alone."

She was a little calmer now. He sat down and wrote a note. Then he remembered that she had no money. He had fortunately changed a cheque the day before and was able to give her five pounds.

"You are good to me, Philip," she said.

"I'm so happy to be able to do something for you."

"Are you fond of me still?"

"Just as fond as ever."

She put up her lips and he kissed her. There was a surrender in the action which he had never seen in her before. It was worth all the agony he had suffered.

She went away and he found that she had been there for two hours. He was extraordinarily happy.

"Poor thing, poor thing," he murmured to himself, his heart glowing with a greater love than he had ever felt before.

He never thought of Norah at all till about eight o'clock a telegram came. He knew before opening it that it was from her.

Is anything the matter? Norah.

He did not know what to do nor what to answer. He could fetch her after the play, in which she was walking on, was over and stroll home with her as he sometimes did; but his whole soul revolted against the idea of seeing her that evening. He thought of writing to her, but he could not bring himself to address her as usual, *dearest Norah.* He made up his mind to telegraph.

Sorry. Could not get away, Philip.

He visualised her. He was slightly repelled by the ugly little face, with its high cheek-bones and the crude colour. There was a coarseness in her skin which gave him goose-flesh. He knew that his telegram must be followed by some action on his part, but at all events it postponed it.

Next day he wired again.

Regret, unable to come. Will write.

Mildred had suggested coming at four in the afternoon, and he would not tell her that the hour was inconvenient. After all she came first. He waited for her impatiently. He watched for her at the window and opened the front-door himself.

"Well? Did you see Nixon?"

"Yes," she answered. "He said it wasn't any good. Nothing's to be done. I must just grin and bear it."

"But that's impossible," cried Philip.

She sat down wearily.

"Did he give any reasons?" he asked.

She gave him a crumpled letter.

"There's your letter, Philip. I never took it. I couldn't tell you yesterday, I really couldn't. Emil didn't marry me. He couldn't. He had a wife already and three children."

Philip felt a sudden pang of jealousy and anguish. It was almost more than he could bear.

"That's why I couldn't go back to my aunt. There's no one I can go to but you."

"What made you go away with him?" Philip asked, in a low voice which he struggled to make firm.

"I don't know. I didn't know he was a married man at first, and when he told me I gave him a piece of my mind. And then I didn't see him for months, and when he came to the shop again

and asked me I don't know what came over me. I felt as if I couldn't help it. I had to go with him."

"Were you in love with him?"

"I don't know. I couldn't hardly help laughing at the things he said. And there was something about him—he said I'd never regret it, he promised to give me seven pounds a week—he said he was earning fifteen, and it was all a lie, he wasn't. And then I was sick of going to the shop every morning, and I wasn't getting on very well with my aunt; she wanted to treat me as a servant instead of a relation, said I ought to do my own room, and if I didn't do it nobody was going to do it for me. Oh, I wish I hadn't. But when he came to the shop and asked me I felt I couldn't help it."

Philip moved away from her. He sat down at the table and buried his face in his hands. He felt dreadfully humiliated.

"You're not angry with me, Philip?" she asked piteously.

"No," he answered, looking up but away from her, "only I'm awfully hurt."

"Why?"

"You see, I was so dreadfully in love with you. I did everything I could to make you care for me. I thought you were incapable of loving anyone. It's so horrible to know that you were willing to sacrifice everything for that bounder. I wonder what you saw in him."

"I'm awfully sorry, Philip. I regretted it bitterly afterwards, I promise you that."

He thought of Emil Miller, with his pasty, unhealthy look, his shifty blue eyes, and the vulgar smartness of his appearance; he always wore bright red knitted waistcoats. Philip sighed. She got up and went to him. She put her arm round his neck.

"I shall never forget that you offered to marry me, Philip."

He took her hand and looked up at her. She bent down and kissed him.

"Philip, if you want me still I'll do anything you like now. I know you're a gentleman in every sense of the word."

His heart stood still. Her words made him feel slightly sick.

"It's awfully good of you, but I couldn't."

"Don't you care for me any more?"

"Yes, I love you with all my heart."

"Then why shouldn't we have a good time while we've got the chance? You see, it can't matter now."

He released himself from her.

"You don't understand. I've been sick with love for you

ever since I saw you, but now—that man. I've unfortunately got a vivid imagination. The thought of it simply disgusts me."

"You are funny," she said.

He took her hand again and smiled at her.

"You mustn't think I'm not grateful. I can never thank you enough, but you see, it's just stronger than I am."

"You are a good friend, Philip."

They went on talking, and soon they had returned to the familiar companionship of old days. It grew late. Philip suggested that they should dine together and go to a music-hall. She wanted some persuasion, for she had an idea of acting up to her situation, and felt instinctively that it did not accord with her distressed condition to go to a place of entertainment. At last Philip asked her to go simply to please him, and when she could look upon it as an act of self-sacrifice she accepted. She had a new thoughtfulness which delighted Philip. She asked him to take her to the little restaurant in Soho to which they had so often been; he was infinitely grateful to her, because her suggestion showed that happy memories were attached to it. She grew much more cheerful as dinner proceeded. The Burgundy from the public house at the corner warmed her heart, and she forgot that she ought to preserve a dolorous countenance. Philip thought it safe to speak to her of the future.

"I suppose you haven't got a brass farthing, have you?" he asked, when an opportunity presented itself.

"Only what you gave me yesterday, and I had to give the landlady three pounds of that."

"Well, I'd better give you a tenner to go on with. I'll go and see my solicitor and get him to write to Miller. We can make him pay up something, I'm sure. If we can get a hundred pounds out of him it'll carry you on till after the baby comes."

"I wouldn't take a penny from him. I'd rather starve."

"But it's monstrous that he should leave you in the lurch like this."

"I've got my pride to consider."

It was a little awkward for Philip. He needed rigid economy to make his own money last till he was qualified, and he must have something over to keep him during the year he intended to spend as house physician and house surgeon either at his own or at some other hospital. But Mildred had told him various stories of Emil's meanness, and he was afraid to remonstrate with her in case she accused him too of want of generosity.

"I wouldn't take a penny piece from him. I'd sooner beg my

bread. I'd have seen about getting some work to do long before now, only it wouldn't be good for me in the state I'm in. You have to think of your health, don't you?"

"You needn't bother about the present," said Philip. "I can let you have all you want till you're fit to work again."

"I knew I could depend on you. I told Emil he needn't think I hadn't got somebody to go to. I told him you was a gentleman in every sense of the word."

By degrees Philip learned how the separation had come about. It appeared that the fellow's wife had discovered the adventure he was engaged in during his periodical visits to London, and had gone to the head of the firm that employed him. She threatened to divorce him, and they announced that they would dismiss him if she did. He was passionately devoted to his children and could not bear the thought of being separated from them. When he had to choose between his wife and his mistress he chose his wife. He had been always anxious that there should be no child to make the entanglement more complicated; and when Mildred, unable longer to conceal its approach, informed him of the fact, he was seized with panic. He picked a quarrel and left her without more ado.

"When d'you expect to be confined?" asked Philip.

"At the beginning of March."

"Three months."

It was necessary to discuss plans. Mildred declared she would not remain in the rooms at Highbury, and Philip thought it more convenient too that she should be nearer to him. He promised to look for something next day. She suggested the Vauxhall Bridge Road as a likely neighbourhood.

"And it would be near for afterwards," she said.

"What do you mean?"

"Well, I should only be able to stay there about two months or a little more, and then I should have to go into a house. I know a very respectable place, where they have a most superior class of people, and they take you for four guineas a week and no extras. Of course the doctor's extra, but that's all. A friend of mine went there, and the lady who keeps it is a thorough lady. I mean to tell her that my husband's an officer in India and I've come to London for my baby, because it's better for my health."

It seemed extraordinary to Philip to hear her talking in this way. With her delicate little features and her pale face she looked cold and maidenly. When he thought of the passions that burnt within her, so unexpected, his heart was strangely troubled. His pulse beat quickly.

LXX

Philip expected to find a letter from Norah when he got back to his rooms, but there was nothing; nor did he receive one the following morning. The silence irritated and at the same time alarmed him. They had seen one another every day he had been in London since the previous June; and it must seem odd to her that he should let two days go by without visiting her or offering a reason for his absence; he wondered whether by an unlucky chance she had seen him with Mildred. He could not bear to think that she was hurt or unhappy, and he made up his mind to call on her that afternoon. He was almost inclined to reproach her because he had allowed himself to get on such intimate terms with her. The thought of continuing them filled him with disgust.

He found two rooms for Mildred on the second floor of a house in the Vauxhall Bridge Road. They were noisy, but he knew that she liked the rattle of traffic under her windows.

"I don't like a dead and alive street where you don't see a soul pass all day," she said. "Give me a bit of life."

Then he forced himself to go to Vincent Square. He was sick with apprehension when he rang the bell. He had an uneasy sense that he was treating Norah badly; he dreaded reproaches; he knew she had a quick temper, and he hated scenes: perhaps the best way would be to tell her frankly that Mildred had come back to him and his love for her was as violent as it had ever been; he was very sorry, but he had nothing to offer Norah any more. Then he thought of her anguish, for he knew she loved him; it had flattered him before, and he was immensely grateful; but now it was horrible. She had not deserved that he should inflict pain upon her. He asked himself how she would greet him now, and as he walked up the stairs all possible forms of her behaviour flashed across his mind. He knocked at the door. He felt that he was pale, and wondered how to conceal his nervousness.

She was writing away industriously, but she sprang to her feet as he entered.

"I recognised your step," she cried. "Where have you been hiding yourself, you naughty boy?"

She came towards him joyfully and put her arms round his neck. She was delighted to see him. He kissed her, and then, to give

himself countenance, said he was dying for tea. She bustled the fire to make the kettle boil.

"I've been awfully busy," he said lamely.

She began to chatter in her bright way, telling him of a new commission she had to provide a novelette for a firm which had not hitherto employed her. She was to get fifteen guineas for it.

"It's money from the clouds. I'll tell you what we'll do, we'll stand ourselves a little jaunt. Let's go and spend a day at Oxford, shall we? I'd love to see the colleges."

He looked at her to see whether there was any shadow of reproach in her eyes; but they were as frank and merry as ever: she was overjoyed to see him. His heart sank. He could not tell her the brutal truth. She made some toast for him, and cut it into little pieces, and gave it him as though he were a child.

"Is the brute fed?" she asked.

He nodded, smiling; and she lit a cigarette for him. Then, as she loved to do, she came and sat on his knees. She was very light. She leaned back in his arms with a sigh of delicious happiness.

"Say something nice to me," she murmured.

"What shall I say?"

"You might by an effort of imagination say that you rather liked me."

"You know I do that."

He had not the heart to tell her then. He would give her peace at all events for that day, and perhaps he might write to her. That would be easier. He could not bear to think of her crying. She made him kiss her, and as he kissed her he thought of Mildred and Mildred's pale, thin lips. The recollection of Mildred remained with him all the time, like an incorporeal form, but more substantial than a shadow; and the sight continually distracted his attention.

"You're very quiet today," Norah said.

Her loquacity was a standing joke between them, and he answered:

"You never let me get a word in, and I've got out of the habit of talking."

"But you're not listening, and that's bad manners."

He reddened a little, wondering whether she had some inkling of his secret; he turned away his eyes uneasily. The weight of her irked him this afternoon, and he did not want her to touch him.

"My foot's gone to sleep," he said.

"I'm so sorry," she cried, jumping up. "I shall have to bant

if I can't break myself of this habit of sitting on gentlemen's knees."

He went through an elaborate form of stamping his foot and walking about. Then he stood in front of the fire so that she should not resume her position. While she talked he thought that she was worth ten of Mildred; she amused him much more and was jollier to talk to; she was cleverer, and she had a much nicer nature. She was a good, brave, honest little woman; and Mildred, he thought bitterly, deserved none of these epithets. If he had any sense he would stick to Norah, she would make him much happier than he would ever be with Mildred: after all she loved him, and Mildred was only grateful for his help. But when all was said the important thing was to love rather than to be loved; and he yearned for Mildred with his whole soul. He would sooner have ten minutes with her than a whole afternoon with Norah, he prized one kiss of her cold lips more than all Norah could give him.

"I can't help myself," he thought. "I've just got her in my bones."

He did not care if she was heartless, vicious and vulgar, stupid and grasping, he loved her. He would rather have misery with the one than happiness with the other.

When he got up to go Norah said casually:

"Well, I shall see you tomorrow, shan't I?"

"Yes," he answered.

He knew that he would not be able to come, since he was going to help Mildred with her moving, but he had not the courage to say so. He made up his mind that he would send a wire. Mildred saw the rooms in the morning, was satisfied with them, and after luncheon Philip went up with her to Highbury. She had a trunk for her clothes and another for the various odds and ends, cushions, lamp-shades, photograph frames, with which she had tried to give the apartments a home-like air; she had two or three large cardboard boxes besides, but in all there was no more than could be put on the roof of a four-wheeler. As they drove through Victoria Street Philip sat well back in the cab in case Norah should happen to be passing. He had not had an opportunity to telegraph and could not do so from the post-office in the Vauxhall Bridge Road, since she would wonder what he was doing in that neighbourhood; and if he was there he could have no excuse for not going into the neighbouring square where she lived. He made up his mind that he had better go in and see her for half an hour; but the necessity irritated him: he was angry with Norah, because she forced him to vulgar and degrading shifts. But he was happy to

be with Mildred. It amused him to help her with the unpacking; and he experienced a charming sense of possession in installing her in these lodgings which he had found and was paying for. He would not let her exert herself. It was a pleasure to do things for her, and she had no desire to do what somebody else seemed desirous to do for her. He unpacked her clothes and put them away. She was not proposing to go out again, so he got her slippers and took off her boots. It delighted him to perform menial offices.

"You do spoil me," she said, running her fingers affectionately through his hair, while he was on his knees unbuttoning her boots.

He took her hands and kissed them.

"It is ripping to have you here."

He arranged the cushions and the photograph frames. She had several jars of green earthenware.

"I'll get you some flowers for them," he said.

He looked round at his work proudly.

"As I'm not going out any more I think I'll get into a tea-gown," she said. "Undo me behind, will you?"

She turned round as unconcernedly as though he were a woman. His sex meant nothing to her. But his heart was filled with gratitude for the intimacy her request showed. He undid the hooks and eyes with clumsy fingers.

"That first day I came into the shop I never thought I'd be doing this for you now," he said, with a laugh which he forced.

"Somebody must do it," she answered.

She went into the bed-room and slipped into a pale blue tea-gown decorated with a great deal of cheap lace. Then Philip settled her on a sofa and made tea for her.

"I'm afraid I can't stay and have it with you," he said regretfully. "I've got a beastly appointment. But I shall be back in half an hour."

He wondered what he should say if she asked him what the appointment was, but she showed no curiosity. He had ordered dinner for the two of them when he took the rooms, and proposed to spend the evening with her quietly. He was in such a hurry to get back that he took a tram along the Vauxhall Bridge Road. He thought he had better break the fact to Norah at once that he could not stay more than a few minutes.

"I say, I've only just got time to say how d'you do," he said, as soon as he got into her rooms. "I'm frightfully busy."

Her face fell.

"Why, what's the matter?"

It exasperated him that she should force him to tell lies, and he knew that he reddened when he answered that there was a demonstration at the hospital which he was bound to go to. He fancied that she looked as though she did not believe him, and this irritated him all the more.

"Oh, well, it doesn't matter," she said. "I shall have you all tomorrow."

He looked at her blankly. It was Sunday, and he had been looking forward to spending the day with Mildred. He told himself that he must do that in common decency; he could not leave her by herself in a strange house.

"I'm awfully sorry, I'm engaged tomorrow."

He knew this was the beginning of a scene which he would have given anything to avoid. The colour on Norah's cheeks grew brighter.

"But I've asked the Gordons to lunch"—they were an actor and his wife who were touring the provinces and in London for Sunday—"I told you about it a week ago."

"I'm awfully sorry, I forgot." He hesitated. "I'm afraid I can't possibly come. Isn't there somebody else you can get?"

"What are you doing tomorrow then?"

"I wish you wouldn't cross-examine me."

"Don't you want to tell me?"

"I don't in the least mind telling you, but it's rather annoying to be forced to account for all one's movements."

Norah suddenly changed. With an effort of self-control she got the better of her temper, and going up to him took his hands.

"Don't disappoint me tomorrow, Philip, I've been looking forward so much to spending the day with you. The Gordons want to see you, and we'll have such a jolly time."

"I'd love to if I could."

"I'm not very exacting, am I? I don't often ask you to do anything that's a bother. Won't you get out of your horrid engagement—just this once?"

"I'm awfully sorry, I don't see how I can," he replied sullenly.

"Tell me what it is," she said coaxingly.

He had had time to invent something.

"Griffiths' two sisters are up for the week-end and we're taking them out."

"Is that all?" she said joyfully. "Griffiths can so easily get another man."

He wished he had thought of something more urgent than that. It was a clumsy lie.

"No, I'm awfully sorry, I can't—I've promised and I mean to keep my promise."

"But you promised me too. Surely I come first."

"I wish you wouldn't persist," he said.

She flared up.

"You won't come because you don't want to. I don't know what you've been doing the last few days, you've been quite different."

He looked at his watch.

"I'm afraid I'll have to be going," he said.

"You won't come tomorrow?"

"No."

"In that case you needn't trouble to come again," she cried, losing her temper for good.

"That's just as you like," he answered.

"Don't let me detain you any longer," she added ironically.

He shrugged his shoulders and walked out. He was relieved that it had gone no worse. There had been no tears. As he walked along he congratulated himself on getting out of the affair so easily. He went into Victoria Street and bought a few flowers to take in to Mildred.

The little dinner was a great success. Philip had sent in a small pot of caviare, which he knew she was very fond of, and the landlady brought them up some cutlets with vegetables and a sweet. Philip had ordered Burgundy, which was her favourite wine. With the curtains drawn, a bright fire, and one of Mildred's shades on the lamp, the room was cosy.

"It's really just like home," smiled Philip.

"I might be worse off, mightn't I?" she answered.

When they finished, Philip drew two arm-chairs in front of the fire, and they sat down. He smoked his pipe comfortably. He felt happy and generous.

"What would you like to do tomorrow?" he asked.

"Oh, I'm going to Tulse Hill. You remember the manageress at the shop, well, she's married now, and she's asked me to go and spend the day with her. Of course she thinks I'm married too."

Philip's heart sank.

"But I refused an invitation so that I might spend Sunday with you."

He thought that if she loved him she would say that in that case she would stay with him. He knew very well that Norah would not have hesitated.

"Well, you were a silly to do that. I've promised to go for three weeks and more."

"But how can you go alone?"

"Oh, I shall say that Emil's away on business. Her husband's in the glove trade, and he's a very superior fellow."

Philip was silent, and bitter feelings passed through his heart. She gave him a sidelong glance.

"You don't grudge me a little pleasure, Philip? You see, it's the last time I shall be able to go anywhere for I don't know how long, and I had promised."

He took her hand and smiled.

"No, darling, I want you to have the best time you can. I only want you to be happy."

There was a little book bound in blue paper lying open, face downwards, on the sofa, and Philip idly took it up. It was a twopenny novelette, and the author was Courtenay Paget. That was the name under which Norah wrote.

"I do like his books," said Mildred. "I read them all. They're so refined."

He remembered what Norah had said of herself.

"I have an immense popularity among kitchen-maids. They think me so genteel."

LXXI

PHILIP, in return for Griffiths' confidences, had told him the details of his own complicated amours, and on Sunday morning, after breakfast when they sat by the fire in their dressing-gowns and smoked, he recounted the scene of the previous day. Griffiths congratulated him because he had got out of his difficulties so easily.

"It's the simplest thing in the world to have an affair with a woman," he remarked sententiously, "but it's a devil of a nuisance to get out of it."

Philip felt a little inclined to pat himself on the back for his skill in managing the business. At all events he was immensely relieved. He thought of Mildred enjoying herself in Tulse Hill, and he found in himself a real satisfaction because she was happy. It was an act of self-sacrifice on his part that he did not grudge her pleasure even though paid for by his own disappointment, and it filled his heart with a comfortable glow.

But on Monday morning he found on his table a letter from Norah. She wrote:

Dearest,

I'm sorry I was cross on Saturday. Forgive me and come to tea in the afternoon as usual. I love you.

Your Norah.

His heart sank, and he did not know what to do. He took the note to Griffiths and showed it to him.

"You'd better leave it unanswered," said he.

"Oh, I can't," cried Philip. "I should be miserable if I thought of her waiting and waiting. You don't know what it is to be sick for the postman's knock. I do, and I can't expose anybody else to that torture."

"My dear fellow, one can't break that sort of affair off without somebody suffering. You must just set your teeth to that. One thing is, it doesn't last very long."

Philip felt that Norah had not deserved that he should make her suffer; and what did Griffiths know about the degrees of anguish she was capable of? He remembered his own pain when Mildred had told him she was going to be married. He did not want anyone to experience what he had experienced then.

"If you're so anxious not to give her pain, go back to her," said Griffiths.

"I can't do that."

He got up and walked up and down the room nervously. He was angry with Norah because she had not let the matter rest. She must have seen that he had no more love to give her. They said women were so quick at seeing those things.

"You might help me," he said to Griffiths.

"My dear fellow, don't make such a fuss about it. People do get over these things, you know. She probably isn't so wrapped up in you as you think, either. One's always rather apt to exaggerate the passion one's inspired other people with."

He paused and looked at Philip with amusement.

"Look here, there's only one thing you can do. Write to her, and tell her the thing's over. Put it so that there can be no mistake about it. It'll hurt her, but it'll hurt her less if you do the thing brutally than if you try half-hearted ways."

Philip sat down and wrote the following letter:

My dear Norah,

I am sorry to make you unhappy, but I think we had better let things remain where we left them on Saturday. I don't think there's any use in letting these things drag on when they've ceased to be amusing. You told me to go and I went. I do not propose to come back. Good-bye.

Philip Carey.

He showed the letter to Griffiths and asked him what he thought of it. Griffiths read it and looked at Philip with twinkling eyes. He did not say what he felt.

"I think that'll do the trick," he said.

Philip went out and posted it. He passed an uncomfortable morning, for he imagined with great detail what Norah would feel when she received his letter. He tortured himself with the thought of her tears. But at the same time he was relieved. Imagined grief was more easy to bear than grief seen, and he was free now to love Mildred with all his soul. His heart leaped at the thought of going to see her that afternoon, when his day's work at the hospital was over.

When as usual he went back to his rooms to tidy himself, he had no sooner put the latch-key in his door than he heard a voice behind him.

"May I come in? I've been waiting for you for half an hour."

It was Norah. He felt himself blush to the roots of his hair. She spoke gaily. There was no trace of resentment in her voice and nothing to indicate that there was a rupture between them. He felt himself cornered. He was sick with fear, but he did his best to smile.

"Yes, do," he said.

He opened the door, and she preceded him into his sitting-room. He was nervous and, to give himself countenance, offered her a cigarette and lit one for himself. She looked at him brightly.

"Why did you write me such a horrid letter, you naughty boy? If I'd taken it seriously it would have made me perfectly wretched."

"It was meant seriously," he answered gravely.

"Don't be so silly. I lost my temper the other day, and I wrote and apologised. You weren't satisfied, so I've come here to apologise again. After all, you're your own master and I have no claims upon you. I don't want you to do anything you don't want to."

She got up from the chair in which she was sitting and went towards him impulsively, with outstretched hands.

"Let's make friends again, Philip. I'm so sorry if I offended you."

He could not prevent her from taking his hands, but he could not look at her.

"I'm afraid it's too late," he said.

She let herself down on the floor by his side and clasped his knees.

"Philip, don't be silly. I'm quick-tempered too and I can understand that I hurt you, but it's so stupid to sulk over it. What's the good of making us both unhappy? It's been so jolly, our friendship." She passed her fingers slowly over his hand. "I love you, Philip."

He got up, disengaging himself from her, and went to the other side of the room.

"I'm awfully sorry, I can't do anything. The whole thing's over."

"D'you mean to say you don't love me any more?"

"I'm afraid so."

"You were just looking for an opportunity to throw me over and you took that one?"

He did not answer. She looked at him steadily for a time which seemed intolerable. She was sitting on the floor where he had left her, leaning against the arm-chair. She began to cry quite silently, without trying to hide her face, and the large tears

rolled down her cheeks one after the other. She did not sob. It was horribly painful to see her. Philip turned away.

"I'm awfully sorry to hurt you. It's not my fault if I don't love you."

She did not answer. She merely sat there, as though she were overwhelmed, and the tears flowed down her cheeks. It would have been easier to bear if she had reproached him. He had thought her temper would get the better of her, and he was prepared for that. At the back of his mind was a feeling that a real quarrel, in which each said to the other cruel things, would in some way be a justification of his behaviour. The time passed. At last he grew frightened by her silent crying; he went into his bed-room and got a glass of water; he leaned over her.

"Won't you drink a little? It'll relieve you."

She put her lips listlessly to the glass and drank two or three mouthfuls. Then in an exhausted whisper she asked him for a handkerchief. She dried her eyes.

"Of course I knew you never loved me as much as I loved you," she moaned.

"I'm afraid that's always the case," he said. "There's always one who loves and one who lets himself be loved."

He thought of Mildred, and a bitter pain traversed his heart. Norah did not answer for a long time.

"I'd been so miserably unhappy, and my life was so hateful," she said at last.

She did not speak to him, but to herself. He had never heard her before complain of the life she had led with her husband or of her poverty. He had always admired the bold front she displayed to the world.

"And then you came along and you were so good to me. And I admired you because you were clever and it was so heavenly to have someone I could put my trust in. I loved you. I never thought it could come to an end. And without any fault of mine at all."

Her tears began to flow again, but now she was more mistress of herself, and she hid her face in Philip's handkerchief. She tried hard to control herself.

"Give me some more water," she said.

She wiped her eyes.

"I'm sorry to make such a fool of myself. I was so unprepared."

"I'm awfully sorry, Norah. I want you to know that I'm very grateful for all you've done for me."

He wondered what it was she saw in him.

"Oh, it's always the same," she sighed, "if you want men to behave well to you, you must be beastly to them; if you treat them decently they make you suffer for it."

She got up from the floor and said she must go. She gave Philip a long, steady look. Then she sighed.

"It's so inexplicable. What does it all mean?"

Philip took a sudden determination.

"I think I'd better tell you, I don't want you to think too badly of me, I want you to see that I can't help myself. Mildred's come back."

The colour came to her face.

"Why didn't you tell me at once? I deserved that surely."

"I was afraid to."

She looked at herself in the glass and set her hat straight.

"Will you call me a cab," she said. "I don't feel I *can* walk."

He went to the door and stopped a passing hansom; but when she followed him into the street he was startled to see how white she was. There was a heaviness in her movements as though she had suddenly grown older. She looked so ill that he had not the heart to let her go alone.

"I'll drive back with you if you don't mind."

She did not answer, and he got into the cab. They drove along in silence over the bridge, through shabby streets in which children, with shrill cries, played in the road. When they arrived at her door she did not immediately get out. It seemed as though she could not summon enough strength to her legs to move.

"I hope you'll forgive me, Norah," he said.

She turned her eyes towards him, and he saw that they were bright again with tears, but she forced a smile to her lips.

"Poor fellow, you're quite worried about me. You mustn't bother. I don't blame you. I shall get over it all right."

Lightly and quickly she stroked his face to show him that she bore no ill-feeling, the gesture was scarcely more than suggested; then she jumped out of the cab and let herself into her house.

Philip paid the hansom and walked to Mildred's lodgings. There was a curious heaviness in his heart. He was inclined to reproach himself. But why? He did not know what else he could have done. Passing a fruiterer's, he remembered that Mildred was fond of grapes. He was so grateful that he could show his love for her by recollecting every whim she had.

LXXII

For the next three months Philip went every day to see Mildred. He took his books with him and after tea worked, while Mildred lay on the sofa reading novels. Sometimes he would look up and watch her for a minute. A happy smile crossed his lips. She would feel his eyes upon her.

"Don't waste your time looking at me, silly. Go on with your work," she said.

"Tyrant," he answered gaily.

He put aside his book when the landlady came in to lay the cloth for dinner, and in his high spirits he exchanged chaff with her. She was a little cockney, of middle-age, with an amusing humour and a quick tongue. Mildred had become great friends with her and had given her an elaborate but mendacious account of the circumstances which had brought her to the pass she was in. The good-hearted little woman was touched and found no trouble too great to make Mildred comfortable. Mildred's sense of propriety had suggested that Philip should pass himself off as her brother. They dined together, and Philip was delighted when he had ordered something which tempted Mildred's capricious appetite. It enchanted him to see her sitting opposite him, and every now and then from sheer joy he took her hand and pressed it. After dinner she sat in the arm-chair by the fire, and he settled himself down on the floor beside her, leaning against her knees, and smoked. Often they did not talk at all, and sometimes Philip noticed that she had fallen into a doze. He dared not move then in case he woke her, and he sat very quietly, looking lazily into the fire and enjoying his happiness.

"Had a nice little nap?" he smiled, when she woke.

"I've not been sleeping," she answered. "I only just closed my eyes."

She would never acknowledge that she had been asleep. She had a phlegmatic temperament, and her condition did not seriously inconvenience her. She took a lot of trouble about her health and accepted the advice of anyone who chose to offer it. She went for a 'constitutional' every morning that it was fine and remained out a definite time. When it was not too cold she sat in St. James' Park. But the rest of the day she spent quite happily on her sofa,

reading one novel after another or chatting with the landlady; she had an inexhaustible interest in gossip, and told Philip with abundant detail the history of the landlady, of the lodgers on the drawing-room floor, and of the people who lived in the next house on either side. Now and then she was seized with panic; she poured out her fears to Philip about the pain of the confinement and was in terror lest she should die; she gave him a full account of the confinements of the landlady and of the lady on the drawing-room floor (Mildred did not know her; "I'm one to keep myself to myself," she said, "I'm not one to go about with anybody.") and she narrated details with a queer mixture of horror and gusto; but for the most part she looked forward to the occurrence with equanimity.

"After all, I'm not the first one to have a baby, am I? And the doctor says I shan't have any trouble. You see, it isn't as if I wasn't well made."

Mrs. Owen, the owner of the house she was going to when her time came, had recommended a doctor, and Mildred saw him once a week. He was to charge fifteen guineas.

"Of course I could have got it done cheaper, but Mrs. Owen strongly recommended him, and I thought it wasn't worth while to spoil the ship for a coat of tar."

"If you feel happy and comfortable I don't mind a bit about the expense," said Philip.

She accepted all that Philip did for her as if it were the most natural thing in the world, and on his side he loved to spend money on her: each five-pound note he gave her caused him a little thrill of happiness and pride; he gave her a good many, for she was not economical.

"I don't know where the money goes to," she said herself, "it seems to slip through my fingers like water."

"It doesn't matter," said Philip. "I'm so glad to be able to do anything I can for you."

She could not sew well and so did not make the necessary things for the baby; she told Philip it was much cheaper in the end to buy them. Philip had lately sold one of the mortgages in which his money had been put; and now, with five hundred pounds in the bank waiting to be invested in something that could be more easily realised, he felt himself uncommonly well-to-do. They talked often of the future. Philip was anxious that Mildred should keep the child with her, but she refused: she had her living to earn, and it would be more easy to do this if she had not also to look after a baby. Her plan was to get back into one of the shops of

the company for which she had worked before, and the child could be put with some decent woman in the country.

"I can find someone who'll look after it well for seven and sixpence a week. It'll be better for the baby and better for me."

It seemed callous to Philip, but when he tried to reason with her she pretended to think he was concerned with the expense.

"You needn't worry about that," she said. "I shan't ask *you* to pay for it."

"You know I don't care how much I pay."

At the bottom of her heart was the hope that the child would be still-born. She did no more than hint it, but Philip saw that the thought was there. He was shocked at first; and then, reasoning with himself, he was obliged to confess that for all concerned such an event was to be desired.

"It's all very fine to say this and that," Mildred remarked querulously, "but it's jolly difficult for a girl to earn her living by herself; it doesn't make it any easier when she's got a baby."

"Fortunately you've got me to fall back on," smiled Philip, taking her hand.

"You have been good to me, Philip."

"Oh, what rot!"

"You can't say I didn't offer anything in return for what you've done."

"Good heavens, I don't want a return. If I've done anything for you, I've done it because I love you. You owe me nothing. I don't want you to do anything unless you love me."

He was a little horrified by her feeling that her body was a commodity which she could deliver indifferently as an acknowledgment for services rendered.

"But I do want to, Philip. You've been so good to me."

"Well, it won't hurt for waiting. When you're all right again we'll go for our little honeymoon."

"You are naughty," she said, smiling.

Mildred expected to be confined early in March, and as soon as she was well enough she was to go to the seaside for a fortnight: that would give Philip a chance to work without interruption for his examination; after that came the Easter holidays, and they had arranged to go to Paris together. Philip talked end'essly of the things they would do. Paris was delightful then. They would take a room in a little hotel he knew in the Latin Quarter, and they would eat in all sorts of charming little restaurants; they would go to the play, and he would take her to music-halls. It would amuse her to meet his friends. He had talked

to her about Cronshaw, she would see him; and there was Lawson, he had gone to Paris for a couple of months; and they would go to the Bal Bullier; there were excursions; they would make trips to Versailles, Chartres, Fontainebleau.

"It'll cost a lot of money," she said.

"Oh, damn the expense. Think how I've been looking forward to it. Don't you know what it means to me? I've never loved anyone but you. I never shall."

She listened to his enthusiasm with smiling eyes. He thought he saw in them a new tenderness, and he was grateful to her. She was much gentler than she used to be. There was in her no longer the superciliousness which had irritated him. She was so accustomed to him now that she took no pains to keep up before him any pretences. She no longer troubled to do her hair with the old elaboration, but just tied it in a knot; and she left off the vast fringe which she generally wore: the more careless style suited her. Her face was so thin that it made her eyes seem very large; there were heavy lines under them, and the pallor of her cheeks made their colour more profound. She had a wistful look which was infinitely pathetic. There seemed to Philip to be in her something of the Madonna. He wished they could continue in that same way always. He was happier than he had ever been in his life.

He used to leave her at ten o'clock every night, for she liked to go to bed early, and he was obliged to put in another couple of hours' work to make up for the lost evening. He generally brushed her hair for her before he went. He had made a ritual of the kisses he gave her when he bade her good-night; first he kissed the palms of her hands, (how thin the fingers were, the nails were beautiful, for she spent much time in manicuring them,) then he kissed her closed eyes, first the right one and then the left, and at last he kissed her lips. He went home with a heart overflowing with love. He longed for an opportunity to gratify the desire for self-sacrifice which consumed him.

Presently the time came for her to move to the nursing-home where she was to be confined. Philip was then able to visit her only in the afternoons. Mildred changed her story and represented herself as the wife of a soldier who had gone to India to join his regiment, and Philip was introduced to the mistress of the establishment as her brother-in-law.

"I have to be rather careful what I say," she told him, "as there's another lady here whose husband's in the Indian Civil."

"I wouldn't let that disturb me if I were you," said Philip.

"I'm convinced that her husband and yours went out on the same boat."

"What boat?" she asked innocently.

"The Flying Dutchman."

Mildred was safely delivered of a daughter, and when Philip was allowed to see her the child was lying by her side. Mildred was very weak, but relieved that everything was over. She showed him the baby, and herself looked at it curiously.

"It's a funny-looking little thing, isn't it? I can't believe it's mine."

It was red and wrinkled and odd. Philip smiled when he looked at it. He did not quite know what to say; and it embarrassed him because the nurse who owned the house was standing by his side; and he felt by the way she was looking at him that, disbelieving Mildred's complicated story, she thought he was the father.

"What are you going to call her?" asked Philip.

"I can't make up my mind if I shall call her Madeleine or Cecilia."

The nurse left them alone for a few minutes, and Philip bent down and kissed Mildred on the mouth.

"I'm so glad it's all over happily, darling."

She put her thin arms round his neck.

"You have been a brick to me, Phil dear."

"Now I feel that you're mine at last. I've waited so long for you, my dear."

They heard the nurse at the door, and Philip hurriedly got up. The nurse entered. There was a slight smile on her lips.

LXXIII

THREE weeks later Philip saw Mildred and her baby off to Brighton. She had made a quick recovery and looked better than he had ever seen her. She was going to a boarding-house where she had spent a couple of week-ends with Emil Miller, and had written to say that her husband was obliged to go to Germany on business and she was coming down with her baby. She got pleasure out of the stories she invented, and she showed a certain fertility of invention in the working out of the details. Mildred proposed to find in Brighton some woman who would be willing to take charge of the baby. Philip was startled at the callousness with which she insisted on getting rid of it so soon, but she argued with common sense that the poor child had much better be put somewhere before it grew used to her. Philip had expected the maternal instinct to make itself felt when she had had the baby two or three weeks and had counted on this to help him persuade her to keep it; but nothing of the sort occurred. Mildred was not unkind to her baby; she did all that was necessary; it amused her sometimes, and she talked about it a good deal; but at heart she was indifferent to it. She could not look upon it as part of herself. She fancied it resembled its father already. She was continually wondering how she would manage when it grew older; and she was exasperated with herself for being such a fool as to have it at all.

"If I'd only known then all I do now," she said.

She laughed at Philip, because he was anxious about its welfare.

"You couldn't make more fuss if you was the father," she said. "I'd like to see Emil getting into such a stew about it."

Philip's mind was full of the stories he had heard of baby-farming and the ghouls who ill-treat the wretched children that selfish, cruel parents have put in their charge.

"Don't be so silly," said Mildred. "That's when you give a woman a sum down to look after a baby. But when you're going to pay so much a week it's to their interest to look after it well."

Philip insisted that Mildred should place the child with people who had no children of their own and would promise to take no other.

"Don't haggle about the price," he said. "I'd rather pay half a guinea a week than run any risk of the kid being starved or beaten."

"You're a funny old thing, Philip," she laughed.

To him there was something very touching in the child's helplessness. It was small, ugly, and querulous. Its birth had been looked forward to with shame and anguish. Nobody wanted it. It was dependent on him, a stranger, for food, shelter, and clothes to cover its nakedness.

As the train started he kissed Mildred. He would have kissed the baby too, but he was afraid she would laugh at him.

"You will write to me, darling, won't you? And I shall look forward to your coming back with oh! such impatience."

"Mind you get through your exam."

He had been working for it industriously, and now with only ten days before him he made a final effort. He was very anxious to pass, first to save himself time and expense, for money had been slipping through his fingers during the last four months with incredible speed; and then because this examination marked the end of the drudgery: after that the student had to do with medicine, midwifery, and surgery, the interest of which was more vivid than the anatomy and physiology with which he had been hitherto concerned. Philip looked forward with interest to the rest of the curriculum. Nor did he want to have to confess to Mildred that he had failed: though the examination was difficult and the majority of candidates were ploughed at the first attempt, he knew that she would think less well of him if he did not succeed; she had a peculiarly humiliating way of showing what she thought.

Mildred sent him a postcard to announce her safe arrival, and he snatched half an hour every day to write a long letter to her. He had always a certain shyness in expressing himself by word of mouth, but he found he could tell her, pen in hand, all sorts of things which it would have made him feel ridiculous to say. Profiting by the discovery he poured out to her his whole heart. He had never been able to tell her before how his adoration filled every part of him so that all his actions, all his thoughts, were touched with it. He wrote to her of the future, the happiness that lay before him, and the gratitude which he owed her. He asked himself (he had often asked himself before but had never put it into words) what it was in her that filled him with such extravagant delight; he did not know; he knew only that when she was with him he was happy, and when she was away from him the world was on a sudden cold and gray; he knew only that when he thought

of her his heart seemed to grow big in his body so that it was difficult to breathe (as if it pressed against his lungs) and it throbbed, so that the delight of her presence was almost pain; his knees shook, and he felt strangely weak as though, not having eaten, he were tremulous from want of food. He looked forward eagerly to her answers. He did not expect her to write often, for he knew that letter-writing came difficultly to her; and he was quite content with the clumsy little note that arrived in reply to four of his. She spoke of the boarding-house in which she had taken a room, of the weather and the baby, told him she had been for a walk on the front with a lady-friend whom she had met in the boarding-house and who had taken such a fancy to baby, she was going to the theatre on Saturday night, and Brighton was filling up. It touched Philip because it was so matter-of-fact. The crabbed style, the formality of the matter, gave him a queer desire to laugh and to take her in his arms and kiss her.

He went into the examination with happy confidence. There was nothing in either of the papers that gave him trouble. He knew that he had done well, and though the second part of the examination was *viva voce* and he was more nervous, he managed to answer the questions adequately. He sent a triumphant telegram to Mildred when the result was announced.

When he got back to his rooms Philip found a letter from her, saying that she thought it would be better for her to stay another week in Brighton. She had found a woman who would be glad to take the baby for seven shillings a week, but she wanted to make inquiries about her, and she was herself benefiting so much by the sea-air that she was sure a few days more would do her no end of good. She hated asking Philip for money, but would he send some by return, as she had had to buy herself a new hat, she couldn't go about with her lady-friend always in the same hat, and her lady-friend was so dressy. Philip had a moment of bitter disappointment. It took away all his pleasure at getting through his examination.

"If she loved me one quarter as much as I love her she couldn't bear to stay away a day longer than necessary."

He put the thought away from him quickly; it was pure selfishness; of course her health was more important than anything else. But he had nothing to do now; he might spend the week with her in Brighton, and they could be together all day. His heart leaped at the thought. It would be amusing to appear before Mildred suddenly with the information that he had taken a room in the boarding-house. He looked out trains. But he paused. He was

not certain that she would be pleased to see him; she had made friends in Brighton; he was quiet, and she liked boisterous joviality; he realised that she amused herself more with other people than with him. It would torture him if he felt for an instant that he was in the way. He was afraid to risk it. He dared not even write and suggest that, with nothing to keep him in town, he would like to spend the week where he could see her every day. She knew he had nothing to do; if she wanted him to come she would have asked him to. He dared not risk the anguish he would suffer if he proposed to come and she made excuses to prevent him.

He wrote to her next day, sent her a five-pound note, and at the end of his letter said that if she were very nice and cared to see him for the week-end he would be glad to run down; but she was by no means to alter any plans she had made. He awaited her answer with impatience. In it she said that if she had only known before she could have arranged it, but she had promised to go to a music-hall on the Saturday night; besides, it would make the people at the boarding-house talk if he stayed there. Why did he not come on Sunday morning and spend the day? They could lunch at the Metropole, and she would take him afterwards to see the very superior lady-like person who was going to take the baby.

Sunday. He blessed the day because it was fine. As the train approached Brighton the sun poured through the carriage window. Mildred was waiting for him on the platform.

"How jolly of you to come and meet me!" he cried, as he seized her hands.

"You expected me, didn't you?"

"I hoped you would. I say, how well you're looking."

"It's done me a rare lot of good, but I think I'm wise to stay here as long as I can. And there are a very nice class of people at the boarding-house. I wanted cheering up after seeing nobody all these months. It was dull sometimes."

She looked very smart in her new hat, a large black straw with a great many inexpensive flowers on it; and round her neck floated a long boa of imitation swansdown. She was still very thin, and she stooped a little when she walked, (she had always done that;) but her eyes did not seem so large; and though she never had any colour, her skin had lost the earthy look it had. They walked down to the sea. Philip, remembering he had not walked with her for months, grew suddenly conscious of his limp and walked stiffly in the attempt to conceal it.

"Are you glad to see me?" he asked, love dancing madly in his heart.

"Of course I am. You needn't ask that."

"By the way, Griffiths sends you his love."

"What cheek!"

He had talked to her a great deal of Griffiths. He had told her how flirtatious he was and had amused her often with the narration of some adventure which Griffiths under the seal of secrecy had imparted to him. Mildred had listened, with some pretence of disgust sometimes, but generally with curiosity; and Philip, admiringly, had enlarged upon his friend's good looks and charm.

"I'm sure you'll like him just as much as I do. He's so jolly and amusing, and he's such an awfully good sort."

Philip told her how, when they were perfect strangers, Griffiths had nursed him through an illness; and in the telling Griffiths' self-sacrifice lost nothing.

"You can't help liking him," said Philip.

"I don't like good-looking men," said Mildred. "They're too conceited for me."

"He wants to know you. I've talked to him about you an awful lot."

"What have you said?" asked Mildred.

Philip had no one but Griffiths to talk to of his love for Mildred, and little by little had told him the whole story of his connection with her. He described her to him fifty times. He dwelt amorously on every detail of her appearance, and Griffiths knew exactly how her thin hands were shaped and how white her face was, and he laughed at Philip when he talked of the charm of her pale, thin lips.

"By Jove, I'm glad I don't take things so badly as that," he said. "Life wouldn't be worth living."

Philip smiled. Griffiths did not know the delight of being so madly in love that it was like meat and wine and the air one breathed and whatever else was essential to existence. Griffiths knew that Philip had looked after the girl while she was having her baby and was now going away with her.

"Well, I must say you've deserved to get something," he remarked. "It must have cost you a pretty penny. It's lucky you can afford it."

"I can't," said Philip. "But what do I care!"

Since it was early for luncheon, Philip and Mildred sat in one of the shelters on the parade, sunning themselves, and watched the people pass. There were the Brighton shop-boys who walked in twos and threes, swinging their canes, and there were the Brighton shop-girls who tripped along in giggling bunches. They could tell

the people who had come down from London for the day; the keen air gave a fillip to their weariness. There were many Jews, stout ladies in tight satin dresses and diamonds, little corpulent men with a gesticulative manner. There were middle-aged gentlemen spending a week-end in one of the large hotels, carefully dressed; and they walked industriously after too substantial a breakfast to give themselves an appetite for too substantial a luncheon: they exchanged the time of day with friends and talked of Dr. Brighton or London-by-the-Sea. Here and there a well-known actor passed, elaborately unconscious of the attention he excited: sometimes he wore patent leather boots, a coat with an astrakhan collar, and carried a silver-knobbed stick; and sometimes, looking as though he had come from a day's shooting, he strolled in knickerbockers, an ulster of Harris tweed, and a tweed hat on the back of his head. The sun shone on the blue sea, and the blue sea was trim and neat.

After luncheon they went to Hove to see the woman who was to take charge of the baby. She lived in a small house in a back street, but it was clean and tidy. Her name was Mrs. Harding. She was an elderly, stout person, with gray hair and a red, fleshy face. She looked motherly in her cap, and Philip thought she seemed kind.

"Won't you find it an awful nuisance to look after a baby?" he asked her.

She explained that her husband was a curate, a good deal older than herself, who had difficulty in getting permanent work, since vicars wanted young men to assist them; he earned a little now and then by doing locums when someone took a holiday or fell ill, and a charitable institution gave them a small pension; but her life was lonely, it would be something to do to look after a child, and the few shillings a week paid for it would help her to keep things going. She promised that it should be well fed.

"Quite the lady, isn't she?" said Mildred, when they went away.

They went back to have tea at the Metropole. Mildred liked the crowd and the band. Philip was tired of talking, and he watched her face as she looked with keen eyes at the dresses of the women who came in. She had a peculiar sharpness for reckoning up what things cost, and now and then she leaned over to him and whispered the result of her meditations.

"D'you see that aigrette there? That cost every bit of seven guineas."

Or: "Look at that ermine, Philip. That's rabbit, that is—that's not ermine." She laughed triumphantly. "I'd know it a mile off."

Philip smiled happily. He was glad to see her pleasure, and

the ingenuousness of her conversation amused and touched him. The band played sentimental music.

After dinner they walked down to the station, and Philip took her arm. He told her what arrangements he had made for their journey to France. She was to come up to London at the end of the week, but she told him that she could not go away till the Saturday of the week after that. He had already engaged a room in a hotel in Paris. He was looking forward eagerly to taking the tickets.

"You won't mind going second-class, will you? We mustn't be extravagant, and it'll be all the better if we can do ourselves pretty well when we get there."

He had talked to her a hundred times of the Quarter. They would wander through its pleasant old streets, and they would sit idly in the charming gardens of the Luxembourg. If the weather was fine perhaps, when they had had enough of Paris, they might go to Fontainebleau. The trees would be just bursting into leaf. The green of the forest in spring was more beautiful than anything he knew; it was like a song, and it was like the happy pain of love. Mildred listened quietly. He turned to her and tried to look deep into her eyes.

"You do want to come, don't you?" he said.

"Of course I do," she smiled.

"You don't know how I'm looking forward to it. I don't know how I shall get through the next days. I'm so afraid something will happen to prevent it. It maddens me sometimes that I can't tell you how much I love you. And at last, at last . . ."

He broke off. They reached the station, but they had dawdled on the way, and Philip had barely time to say good-night. He kissed her quickly and ran towards the wicket as fast as he could. She stood where he left her. He was strangely grotesque when he ran.

LXXIV

The following Saturday Mildred returned, and that evening Philip kept her to himself. He took seats for the play, and they drank champagne at dinner. It was her first gaiety in London for so long that she enjoyed everything ingenuously. She cuddled up to Philip when they drove from the theatre to the room he had taken for her in Pimlico.

"I really believe you're quite glad to see me," he said.

She did not answer, but gently pressed his hand. Demonstrations of affection were so rare with her that Philip was enchanted.

"I've asked Griffiths to dine with us tomorrow," he told her.

"Oh, I'm glad you've done that. I wanted to meet him."

There was no place of entertainment to take her to on Sunday night, and Philip was afraid she would be bored if she were alone with him all day. Griffiths was amusing; he would help them to get through the evening; and Philip was so fond of them both that he wanted them to know and to like one another. He left Mildred with the words:

"Only six days more."

They had arranged to dine in the gallery at Romano's on Sunday, because the dinner was excellent and looked as though it cost a good deal more than it did. Philip and Mildred arrived first and had to wait some time for Griffiths.

"He's an unpunctual devil," said Philip. "He's probably making love to one of his numerous flames."

But presently he appeared. He was a handsome creature, tall and thin; his head was placed well on the body, it gave him a conquering air which was attractive; and his curly hair, his bold, friendly blue eyes, his red mouth, were charming. Philip saw Mildred look at him with appreciation, and he felt a curious satisfaction. Griffiths greeted them with a smile.

"I've heard a great deal about you," he said to Mildred, as he took her hand.

"Not so much as I've heard about you," she answered.

"Nor so bad," said Philip.

"Has he been blackening my character?"

Griffiths laughed, and Philip saw that Mildred noticed how white and regular his teeth were and how pleasant his smile.

"You ought to feel like old friends," said Philip. "I've talked so much about you to one another."

Griffiths was in the best possible humour, for, having at length passed his final examination, he was qualified, and he had just been appointed house-surgeon at a hospital in the North of London. He was taking up his duties at the beginning of May and meanwhile was going home for a holiday; this was his last week in town, and he was determined to get as much enjoyment into it as he could. He began to talk the gay nonsense which Philip admired because he could not copy it. There was nothing much in what he said, but his vivacity gave it point. There flowed from him a force of life which affected everyone who knew him; it was almost as sensible as bodily warmth. Mildred was more lively than Philip had ever known her, and he was delighted to see that his little party was a success. She was amusing herself enormously. She laughed louder and louder. She quite forgot the genteel reserve which had become second nature to her.

Presently Griffiths said:

"I say, it's dreadfully difficult for me to call you Mrs. Miller. Philip never calls you anything but Mildred."

"I daresay she won't scratch your eyes out if you call her that too," laughed Philip.

"Then she must call me Harry."

Philip sat silent while they chattered away and thought how good it was to see people happy. Now and then Griffiths teased him a little, kindly, because he was always so serious.

"I believe he's quite fond of you, Philip," smiled Mildred.

"He isn't a bad old thing," answered Griffiths, and taking Philip's hand he shook it gaily.

It seemed an added charm in Griffiths that he liked Philip. They were all sober people, and the wine they had drunk went to their heads. Griffiths became more talkative and so boisterous that Philip, amused, had to beg him to be quiet. He had a gift for story-telling, and his adventures lost nothing of their romance and their laughter in his narration. He played in all of them a gallant, humorous part. Mildred, her eyes shining with excitement, urged him on. He poured out anecdote after anecdote. When the lights began to be turned out she was astonished.

"My word, the evening has gone quickly. I thought it wasn't more than half past nine."

They got up to go and when she said good-bye, she added:

"I'm coming to have tea at Philip's room tomorrow. You might look in if you can."

"All right," he smiled.

On the way back to Pimlico Mildred talked of nothing but Griffiths. She was taken with his good looks, his well-cut clothes, his voice, his gaiety.

"I *am* glad you like him," said Philip. "D'you remember you were rather sniffy about meeting him?"

"I think it's so nice of him to be so fond of you, Philip. He is a nice friend for you to have."

She put up her face to Philip for him to kiss her. It was a thing she did rarely.

"I have enjoyed myself this evening, Philip. Thank you so much."

"Don't be so absurd," he laughed, touched by her appreciation so that he felt the moisture come to his eyes.

She opened her door and, just before she went in, turned again to Philip.

"Tell Harry I'm madly in love with him," she said.

"All right," he laughed. "Good-night."

Next day, when they were having tea, Griffiths came in. He sank lazily into an arm-chair. There was something strangely sensual in the slow movements of his large limbs. Philip remained silent, while the others chattered away, but he was enjoying himself. He admired them both so much that it seemed natural enough for them to admire one another. He did not care if Griffiths absorbed Mildred's attention, he would have her to himself during the evening; he had something the attitude of a loving husband, confident in his wife's affection, who looks on with amusement while she flirts harmlessly with a stranger. But at half past seven he looked at his watch and said:

"It's about time we went out to dinner, Mildred."

There was a moment's pause, and Griffiths seemed to be considering.

"Well, I'll be getting along," he said at last. "I didn't know it was so late."

"Are you doing anything tonight?" asked Mildred.

"No."

There was another silence. Philip felt slightly irritated.

"I'll just go and have a wash," he said, and to Mildred he added: "Would you like to wash your hands?"

She did not answer him.

"Why don't you come and dine with us?" she said to Griffiths.

He looked at Philip and saw him staring at him sombrely.

"I dined with you last night," he laughed. "I should be in the way."

"Oh, that doesn't matter," insisted Mildred. "Make him come, Philip. He won't be in the way, will he?"

"Let him come by all means if he'd like to."

"All right, then," said Griffiths promptly. "I'll just go upstairs and tidy myself."

The moment he left the room Philip turned to Mildred angrily.

"Why on earth did you ask him to dine with us?"

"I couldn't help myself. It would have looked so funny to say nothing when he said he wasn't doing anything."

"Oh, what rot! And why the hell did you ask him if he was doing anything?"

Mildred's pale lips tightened a little.

"I want a little amusement sometimes. I get tired always being alone with you."

They heard Griffiths coming heavily down the stairs, and Philip went into his bed-room to wash. They dined in the neighbourhood in an Italian restaurant. Philip was cross and silent, but he quickly realised that he was showing to disadvantage in comparison with Griffiths, and he forced himself to hide his annoyance. He drank a good deal of wine to destroy the pain that was gnawing at his heart, and he set himself to talk. Mildred, as though remorseful for what she had said, did all she could to make herself pleasant to him. She was kindly and affectionate. Presently Philip began to think he had been a fool to surrender to a feeling of jealousy. After dinner when they got into a hansom to drive to a music-hall Mildred, sitting between the two men, of her own accord gave him her hand. His anger vanished. Suddenly, he knew not how, he grew conscious that Griffiths was holding her other hand. The pain seized him again violently, it was a real physical pain, and he asked himself, panic-stricken, what he might have asked himself before, whether Mildred and Griffiths were in love with one another. He could not see anything of the performance on account of the mist of suspicion, anger, dismay, and wretchedness which seemed to be before his eyes; but he forced himself to conceal the fact that anything was the matter; he went on talking and laughing. Then a strange desire to torture himself seized him, and he got up, saying he wanted to go and drink something. Mildred and Griffiths had never been alone together for a moment. He wanted to leave them by themselves.

"I'll come too," said Griffiths. "I've got rather a thirst on."

"Oh, nonsense, you stay and talk to Mildred."

Philip did not know why he said that. He was throwing them together now to make the pain he suffered more intolerable. He did not go to the bar, but up into the balcony, from where he could watch them and not be seen. They had ceased to look at the stage and were smiling into one another's eyes. Griffiths was talking with his usual happy fluency and Mildred seemed to hang on his lips. Philip's head began to ache frightfully. He stood there motionless. He knew he would be in the way if he went back. They were enjoying themselves without him, and he was suffering, suffering. Time passed, and now he had an extraordinary shyness about rejoining them. He knew they had not thought of him at all, and he reflected bitterly that he had paid for the dinner and their seats in the music-hall. What a fool they were making of him! He was hot with shame. He could see how happy they were without him. His instinct was to leave them to themselves and go home, but he had not his hat and coat, and it would necessitate endless explanations. He went back. He felt a shadow of annoyance in Mildred's eyes when she saw him, and his heart sank.

"You've been a devil of a time," said Griffiths, with a smile of welcome.

"I met some men I knew. I've been talking to them, and I couldn't get away. I thought you'd be all right together."

"I've been enjoying myself thoroughly," said Griffiths. "I don't know about Mildred."

She gave a little laugh of happy complacency. There was a vulgar sound in the ring of it that horrified Philip. He suggested that they should go.

"Come on," said Griffiths, "we'll both drive you home."

Philip suspected that she had suggested that arrangement so that she might not be left alone with him. In the cab he did not take her hand nor did she offer it, and he knew all the time that she was holding Griffiths'. His chief thought was that it was all so horribly vulgar. As they drove along he asked himself what plans they had made to meet without his knowledge, he cursed himself for having left them alone, he had actually gone out of his way to enable them to arrange things.

"Let's keep the cab," said Philip, when they reached the house in which Mildred was lodging. "I'm too tired to walk home."

On the way back Griffiths talked gaily and seemed indifferent to the fact that Philip answered in monosyllables. Philip felt he must notice that something was the matter. Philip's silence at last grew too significant to struggle against, and Griffiths, suddenly nervous, ceased talking. Philip wanted to say something, but he

was so shy he could hardly bring himself to, and yet the time was passing and the opportunity would be lost. It was best to get at the truth at once. He forced himself to speak.

"Are you in love with Mildred?" he asked suddenly.

"I?" Griffiths laughed. "Is that what you've been so funny about this evening? Of course not. My dear old man."

He tried to slip his hand through Philip's arm, but Philip drew himself away. He knew Griffiths was lying. He could not bring himself to force Griffiths to tell him that he had not been holding the girl's hand. He suddenly felt very weak and broken.

"It doesn't matter to you, Harry," he said. "You've got so many women—don't take her away from me. It means my whole life. I've been so awfully wretched."

His voice broke, and he could not prevent the sob that was torn from him. He was horribly ashamed of himself.

"My dear old boy, you know I wouldn't do anything to hurt you. I'm far too fond of you for that. I was only playing the fool. If I'd known you were going to take it like that I'd have been more careful."

"Is that true?" asked Philip.

"I don't care a twopenny damn for her. I give you my word of honour."

Philip gave a sigh of relief. The cab stopped at their door.

LXXV

Next day Philip was in a good temper. He was very anxious not to bore Mildred with too much of his society, and so had arranged that he should not see her till dinner-time. She was ready when he fetched her, and he chaffed her for her unwonted punctuality. She was wearing a new dress he had given her. He remarked on its smartness.

"It'll have to go back and be altered," she said. "The skirt hangs all wrong."

"You'll have to make the dressmaker hurry up if you want to take it to Paris with you."

"It'll be ready in time for that."

"Only three more whole days. We'll go over by the eleven o'clock, shall we?"

"If you like."

He would have her for nearly a month entirely to himself. His eyes rested on her with hungry adoration. He was able to laugh a little at his own passion.

"I wonder what it is I see in you," he smiled.

"That's a nice thing to say," she answered.

Her body was so thin that one could almost see her skeleton Her chest was as flat as a boy's. Her mouth, with its narrow pale lips, was ugly, and her skin was faintly green.

"I shall give you Blaud's Pills in quantities when we're away," said Philip, laughing. "I'm going to bring you back fat and rosy."

"I don't want to get fat," she said.

She did not speak of Griffiths, and presently while they were dining Philip half in malice, for he felt sure of himself and his power over her, said:

"It seems to me you were having a great flirtation with Harry last night?"

"I told you I was in love with him," she laughed.

"I'm glad to know that he's not in love with you."

"How d'you know?"

"I asked him."

She hesitated a moment, looking at Philip, and a curious gleam came into her eyes.

"Would you like to read a letter I had from him this morning?"

She handed him an envelope and Philip recognised Griffiths' bold, legible writing. There were eight pages. It was well written, frank and charming; it was the letter of a man who was used to making love to women. He told Mildred that he loved her passionately, he had fallen in love with her the first moment he saw her; he did not want to love her, for he knew how fond Philip was of her, but he could not help himself. Philip was such a dear, and he was very much ashamed of himself, but it was not his fault, he was just carried away. He paid her delightful compliments. Finally he thanked her for consenting to lunch with him next day and said he was dreadfully impatient to see her. Philip noticed that the letter was dated the night before; Griffiths must have written it after leaving Philip, and had taken the trouble to go out and post it when Philip thought he was in bed.

He read it with a sickening palpitation of his heart, but gave no outward sign of surprise. He handed it back to Mildred with a smile, calmly.

"Did you enjoy your lunch?"

"Rather," she said emphatically.

He felt that his hands were trembling, so he put them under the table.

"You mustn't take Griffiths too seriously. He's just a butterfly, you know."

She took the letter and looked at it again.

"I can't help it either," she said, in a voice which she tried to make nonchalant. "I don't know what's come over me."

"It's a little awkward for me, isn't it?" said Philip.

She gave him a quick look.

"You're taking it pretty calmly, I must say."

"What do you expect me to do? Do you want me to tear out my hair in handfuls?"

"I knew you'd be angry with me."

"The funny thing is, I'm not at all. I ought to have known this would happen. I was a fool to bring you together. I know perfectly well that he's got every advantage over me; he's much jollier, and he's very handsome, he's more amusing, he can talk to you about the things that interest you."

"I don't know what you mean by that. If I'm not clever I can't help it, but I'm not the fool you think I am, not by a long way, I can tell you. You're a bit too superior for me, my young friend."

"D'you want to quarrel with me?" he asked mildly.

"No, but I don't see why you should treat me as if I was I don't know what."

"I'm sorry, I didn't mean to offend you. I just wanted to talk things over quietly. We don't want to make a mess of them if we can help it. I saw you were attracted by him and it seemed to me very natural. The only thing that really hurts me is that he should have encouraged you. He knew how awfully keen I was on you. I think it's rather shabby of him to have written that letter to you five minutes after he told me he didn't care twopence about you."

"If you think you're going to make me like him any the less by saying nasty things about him, you're mistaken."

Philip was silent for a moment. He did not know what words he could use to make her see his point of view. He wanted to speak coolly and deliberately, but he was in such a turmoil of emotion that he could not clear his thoughts.

"It's not worth while sacrificing everything for an infatuation that you know can't last. After all, he doesn't care for anyone more than ten days, and you're rather cold; that sort of thing doesn't mean very much to you."

"That's what you think."

She made it more difficult for him by adopting a cantankerous tone.

"If you're in love with him you can't help it. I'll just bear it as best I can. We get on very well together, you and I, and I've not behaved badly to you, have I? I've always known that you're not in love with me, but you like me all right, and when we get over to Paris you'll forget about Griffiths. If you make up your mind to put him out of your thoughts you won't find it so hard as all that, and I've deserved that you should do something for me."

She did not answer, and they went on eating their dinner. When the silence grew oppressive Philip began to talk of indifferent things. He pretended not to notice that Mildred was inattentive. Her answers were perfunctory, and she volunteered no remarks of her own. At last she interrupted abruptly what he was saying:

"Philip, I'm afraid I shan't be able to go away on Saturday. The doctor says I oughtn't to."

He knew this was not true, but he answered:

"When will you be able to come away?"

She glanced at him, saw that his face was white and rigid, and looked nervously away. She was at that moment a little afraid of him.

"I may as well tell you and have done with it, I can't come away with you at all."

"I thought you were driving at that. It's too late to change your mind now. I've got the tickets and everything."

"You said you didn't wish me to go unless I wanted it too, and I don't."

"I've changed my mind. I'm not going to have any more tricks played with me. You must come."

"I like you very much, Philip, as a friend. But I can't bear to think of anything else. I don't like you that way. I couldn't, Philip."

"You were quite willing to a week ago."

"It was different then."

"You hadn't met Griffiths?"

"You said yourself I couldn't help it if I'm in love with him."

Her face was set into a sulky look, and she kept her eyes fixed on her plate. Philip was white with rage. He would have liked to hit her in the face with his clenched fist, and in fancy he saw how she would look with a black eye. There were two lads of eighteen dining at a table near them, and now and then they looked at Mildred; he wondered if they envied him dining with a pretty girl; perhaps they were wishing they stood in his shoes. It was Mildred who broke the silence.

"What's the good of our going away together? I'd be thinking of him all the time. It wouldn't be much fun for you."

"That's my business," he answered.

She thought over all his reply implicated, and she reddened.

"But that's just beastly."

"What of it?"

"I thought you were a gentleman in every sense of the word."

"You were mistaken."

His reply entertained him, and he laughed as he said it.

"For God's sake don't laugh," she cried. "I can't come away with you, Philip. I'm awfully sorry. I know I haven't behaved well to you, but one can't force themselves."

"Have you forgotten that when you were in trouble I did everything for you? I planked out the money to keep you till your baby was born, I paid for your doctor and everything, I paid for you to go to Brighton, and I'm paying for the keep of your baby, I'm paying for your clothes, I'm paying for every stitch you've got on now."

"If you was a gentleman you wouldn't throw what you've done for me in my face."

"Oh, for goodness' sake, shut up. What d'you suppose I care if I'm a gentleman or not? If I were a gentleman I shouldn't waste my time with a vulgar slut like you. I don't care a damn if you like me or not. I'm sick of being made a blasted fool of. You're jolly well coming to Paris with me on Saturday or you can take the consequences."

Her cheeks were red with anger, and when she answered her voice had the hard commonness which she concealed generally by a genteel enunciation.

"I never liked you, not from the beginning, but you forced yourself on me, I always hated it when you kissed me. I wouldn't let you touch me now not if I was starving."

Philip tried to swallow the food on his plate, but the muscles of his throat refused to act. He gulped down something to drink and lit a cigarette. He was trembling in every part. He did not speak. He waited for her to move, but she sat in silence, staring at the white table-cloth. If they had been alone he would have flung his arms round her and kissed her passionately; he fancied the throwing back of her long white throat as he pressed upon her mouth with his lips. They passed an hour without speaking, and at last Philip thought the waiter began to stare at them curiously. He called for the bill.

"Shall we go?" he said then, in an even tone.

She did not reply, but gathered together her bag and her gloves. She put on her coat.

"When are you seeing Griffiths again?"

"Tomorrow," she answered indifferently.

"You'd better talk it over with him."

She opened her bag mechanically and saw a piece of paper in it. She took it out.

"Here's the bill for this dress," she said hesitatingly.

"What of it?"

"I promised I'd give her the money tomorrow."

"Did you?"

"Does that mean you won't pay for it after having told me I could get it?"

"It does."

"I'll ask Harry," she said, flushing quickly.

"He'll be glad to help you. He owes me seven pounds at the moment, and he pawned his microscope last week, because he was so broke."

"You needn't think you can frighten me by that. I'm quite capable of earning my own living."

"It's the best thing you can do. I don't propose to give you a farthing more."

She thought of her rent due on Saturday and the baby's keep, but did not say anything. They left the restaurant, and in the street Philip asked her:

"Shall I call a cab for you? I'm going to take a little stroll."

"I haven't got any money. I had to pay a bill this afternoon."

"It won't hurt you to walk. If you want to see me tomorrow I shall be in about tea-time."

He took off his hat and sauntered away. He looked round in a moment and saw that she was standing helplessly where he had left her, looking at the traffic. He went back and with a laugh pressed a coin into her hand.

"Here's two bob for you to get home with."

Before she could speak he hurried away.

LXXVI

Next day, in the afternoon, Philip sat in his room and wondered whether Mildred would come. He had slept badly. He had spent the morning in the club of the Medical School, reading one newspaper after another. It was the vacation and few students he knew were in London, but he found one or two people to talk to, he played a game of chess, and so wore out the tedious hours. After luncheon he felt so tired, his head was aching so, that he went back to his lodgings and lay down; he tried to read a novel. He had not seen Griffiths. He was not in when Philip returned the night before; he heard him come back, but he did not as usual look into Philip's room to see if he was asleep; and in the morning Philip heard him go out early. It was clear that he wanted to avoid him. Suddenly there was a light tap at his door. Philip sprang to his feet and opened it. Mildred stood on the threshold. She did not move.

"Come in," said Philip.

He closed the door after her. She sat down. She hesitated to begin.

"Thank you for giving me that two shillings last night," she said.

"Oh, that's all right."

She gave him a faint smile. It reminded Philip of the timid, ingratiating look of a puppy that has been beaten for naughtiness and wants to reconcile himself with his master.

"I've been lunching with Harry," she said.

"Have you?"

"If you still want me to go away with you on Saturday, Philip, I'll come."

A quick thrill of triumph shot through his heart, but it was a sensation that only lasted an instant; it was followed by a suspicion.

"Because of the money?" he asked.

"Partly," she answered simply. "Harry can't do anything. He owes five weeks here, and he owes you seven pounds, and his tailor's pressing him for money. He'd pawn anything he could, but he's pawned everything already. I had a job to put the woman off about my new dress, and on Saturday there's the book at my lodgings, and I can't get work in five minutes. It always means waiting some little time till there's a vacancy."

She said all this in an even, querulous tone, as though she were recounting the injustices of fate, which had to be borne as part of the natural order of things. Philip did not answer. He knew what she told him well enough.

"You said partly," he observed at last.

"Well, Harry says you've been a brick to both of us. You've been a real good friend to him, he says, and you've done for me what p'raps no other man would have done. We must do the straight thing, he says. And he said what you said about him, that he's fickle by nature, he's not like you, and I should be a fool to throw you away for him. He won't last and you will, he says so himself."

"D'you *want* to come away with me?" asked Philip.

"I don't mind."

He looked at her, and the corners of his mouth turned down in an expression of misery. He had triumphed indeed, and he was going to have his way. He gave a little laugh of derision at his own humiliation. She looked at him quickly, but did not speak.

"I've looked forward with all my soul to going away with you, and I thought at last, after all that wretchedness, I was going to be happy . . ."

He did not finish what he was going to say. And then on a sudden, without warning, Mildred broke into a storm of tears. She was sitting in the chair in which Norah had sat and wept, and like her she hid her face on the back of it, towards the side where there was a little bump formed by the sagging in the middle, where the head had rested.

"I'm not lucky with women," thought Philip.

Her thin body was shaken with sobs. Philip had never seen a woman cry with such an utter abandonment. It was horribly painful, and his heart was torn. Without realising what he did, he went up to her and put his arms round her; she did not resist, but in her wretchedness surrendered herself to his comforting. He whispered to her little words of solace. He scarcely knew what he was saying, he bent over her and kissed her repeatedly.

"Are you awfully unhappy?" he said at last.

"I wish I was dead," she moaned. "I wish I'd died when the baby come."

Her hat was in her way, and Philip took it off for her. He placed her head more comfortably in the chair, and then he went and sat down at the table and looked at her.

"It is awful, love, isn't it?" he said. "Fancy anyone wanting to be in love."

Presently the violence of her sobbing diminished and she sat in the chair, exhausted, with her head thrown back and her arms hanging by her side. She had the grotesque look of one of those painters' dummies used to hang draperies on.

"I didn't know you loved him so much as all that," said Philip.

He understood Griffiths' love well enough, for he put himself in Griffiths' place and saw with his eyes, touched with his hands; he was able to think himself in Griffiths' body, and he kissed her with his lips, smiled at her with his smiling blue eyes. It was her emotion that surprised him. He had never thought her capable of passion, and this was passion: there was no mistaking it. Something seemed to give way in his heart; it really felt to him as though something were breaking, and he felt strangely weak.

"I don't want to make you unhappy. You needn't come away with me if you don't want to. I'll give you the money all the same."

She shook her head.

"No, I said I'd come, and I'll come."

"What's the good, if you're sick with love for him?"

"Yes, that's the word. I'm sick with love. I know it won't last, just as well as he does, but just now . . ."

She paused and shut her eyes as though she were going to faint. A strange idea came to Philip, and he spoke it as it came, without stopping to think it out.

"Why don't you go away with him?"

"How can I? You know we haven't got the money."

"I'll give you the money."

"You?"

She sat up and looked at him. Her eyes began to shine, and the colour came into her cheeks.

"Perhaps the best thing would be to get it over, and then you'd come back to me."

Now that he had made the suggestion he was sick with anguish, and yet the torture of it gave him a strange, subtle sensation. She stared at him with open eyes.

"Oh, how could we, on your money? Harry wouldn't think of it."

"Oh yes, he would, if you persuaded him."

Her objections made him insist, and yet he wanted her with all his heart to refuse vehemently.

"I'll give you a fiver, and you can go away from Saturday to Monday. You could easily do that. On Monday he's going home till he takes up his appointment at the North London."

"Oh, Philip, do you mean that?" she cried, clasping her hands. "If you could only let us go—I would love you so much afterwards, I'd do anything for you. I'm sure I shall get over it if you'll only do that. Would you really give us the money?"

"Yes," he said.

She was entirely changed now. She began to laugh. He could see that she was insanely happy. She got up and knelt down by Philip's side, taking his hands.

"You are a brick, Philip. You're the best fellow I've ever known. Won't you be angry with me afterwards?"

He shook his head, smiling, but with what agony in his heart!

"May I go and tell Harry now? And can I say to him that you don't mind? He won't consent unless you promise it doesn't matter. Oh, you don't know how I love him! And afterwards I'll do anything you like. I'll come over to Paris with you or anywhere on Monday."

She got up and put on her hat.

"Where are you going?"

"I'm going to ask him if he'll take me."

"Already?"

"D'you want me to stay? I'll stay if you like."

She sat down, but he gave a little laugh.

"No, it doesn't matter, you'd better go at once. There's only one thing: I can't bear to see Griffiths just now, it would hurt me too awfully. Say I have no ill-feeling towards him or anything like that, but ask him to keep out of my way."

"All right." She sprang up and put on her gloves. "I'll let you know what he says."

"You'd better dine with me tonight."

"Very well."

She put up her face for him to kiss her, and when he pressed his lips to hers she threw her arms round his neck.

"You are a darling, Philip."

She sent him a note a couple of hours later to say that she had a headache and could not dine with him. Philip had almost expected it. He knew that she was dining with Griffiths. He was horribly jealous, but the sudden passion which had seized the pair of them seemed like something that had come from the outside, as though a god had visited them with it, and he felt himself helpless. It seemed so natural that they should love one another. He saw all the advantages that Griffiths had over himself and confessed that in Mildred's place he would have done as Mildred did.

What hurt him most was Griffiths' treachery; they had been such good friends, and Griffiths knew how passionately devoted he was to Mildred: he might have spared him.

He did not see Mildred again till Friday; he was sick for a sight of her by then; but when she came and he realised that he had gone out of her thoughts entirely, for they were engrossed in Griffiths, he suddenly hated her. He saw now why she and Griffiths loved one another, Griffiths was stupid, oh so stupid! he had known that all along, but had shut his eyes to it, stupid and empty-headed: that charm of his concealed an utter selfishness; he was willing to sacrifice anyone to his appetites. And how inane was the life he led, lounging about bars and drinking in music-halls, wandering from one light amour to another! He never read a book, he was blind to everything that was not frivolous and vulgar; he had never a thought that was fine: the word most common on his lips was smart; that was his highest praise for man or woman. Smart! It was no wonder he pleased Mildred. They suited one another.

Philip talked to Mildred of things that mattered to neither of them. He knew she wanted to speak of Griffiths, but he gave her no opportunity. He did not refer to the fact that two evenings before she had put off dining with him on a trivial excuse. He was casual with her, trying to make her think he was suddenly grown indifferent; and he exercised peculiar skill in saying little things which he knew would wound her; but which were so indefinite, so delicately cruel, that she could not take exception to them. At last she got up.

"I think I must be going off now," she said.

"I daresay you've got a lot to do," he answered.

She held out her hand, he took it, said good-bye, and opened the door for her. He knew what she wanted to speak about, and he knew also that his cold, ironical air intimidated her. Often his shyness made him seem so frigid that unintentionally he frightened people, and, having discovered this, he was able when occasion arose to assume the same manner.

"You haven't forgotten what you promised?" she said at last, as he held open the door.

"What is that?"

"About the money."

"How much d'you want?"

He spoke with an icy deliberation which made his words peculiarly offensive. Mildred flushed. He knew she hated him at that moment, and he wondered at the self-control by which she pre-

vented herself from flying out at him. He wanted to make her suffer.

"There's the dress and the book tomorrow. That's all. Harry won't come, so we shan't want money for that."

Philip's heart gave a great thud against his ribs, and he let the door-handle go. The door swung to.

"Why not?"

"He says we couldn't, not on your money."

A devil seized Philip, a devil of self-torture which was always lurking within him, and, though with all his soul he wished that Griffiths and Mildred should not go away together, he could not help himself; he set himself to persuade Griffiths through her.

"I don't see why not, if I'm willing," he said.

"That's what I told him."

"I should have thought if he really wanted to go he wouldn't hesitate."

"Oh, it's not that, he wants to all right. He'd go at once if he had the money."

"If he's squeamish about it I'll give *you* the money."

"I said you'd lend it if he liked, and we'd pay it back as soon as we could."

"It's rather a change for you going on your knees to get a man to take you away for a week-end."

"It is rather, isn't it?" she said, with a shameless little laugh.

It sent a cold shudder down Philip's spine.

"What are you going to do then?" he asked.

"Nothing. He's going home tomorrow. He must."

That would be Philip's salvation. With Griffiths out of the way he could get Mildred back. She knew no one in London, she would be thrown on to his society, and when they were alone together he could soon make her forget this infatuation. If he said nothing more he was safe. But he had a fiendish desire to break down their scruples, he wanted to know how abominably they could behave towards him; if he tempted them a little more they would yield, and he took a fierce joy at the thought of their dishonour. Though every word he spoke tortured him, he found in the torture a horrible delight.

"It looks as if it were now or never."

"That's what I told him," she said.

There was a passionate note in her voice which struck Philip. He was biting his nails in his nervousness.

"Where were you thinking of going?"

"Oh, to Oxford. He was at the 'Varsity there, you know. He said he'd show me the colleges."

Philip remembered that once he had suggested going to Oxford for the day, and she had expressed firmly the boredom she felt at the thought of sights.

"And it looks as if you'd have fine weather. It ought to be very jolly there just now."

"I've done all I could to persuade him."

"Why don't you have another try?"

"Shall I say you want us to go?"

"I don't think you must go as far as that," said Philip.

She paused for a minute or two, looking at him. Philip forced himself to look at her in a friendly way. He hated her, he despised her, he loved her with all his heart.

"I'll tell you what I'll do, I'll go and see if he can't arrange it. And then, if he says yes, I'll come and fetch the money tomorrow. When shall you be in?"

"I'll come back here after luncheon and wait."

"All right."

"I'll give you the money for your dress and your room now."

He went to his desk and took out what money he had. The dress was six guineas; there was besides her rent and her food, and the baby's keep for a week. He gave her eight pounds ten.

"Thanks very much," she said.

She left him.

LXXVII

After lunching in the basement of the Medical School Philip went back to his rooms. It was Saturday afternoon, and the landlady was cleaning the stairs.

"Is Mr. Griffiths in?" he asked.

"No, sir. He went away this morning, soon after you went out."

"Isn't he coming back?"

"I don't think so, sir. He's taken his luggage."

Philip wondered what this could mean. He took a book and began to read. It was Burton's *Journey to Meccah,* which he had just got out of the Westminster Public Library; and he read the first page, but could make no sense of it, for his mind was elsewhere; he was listening all the time for a ring at the bell. He dared not hope that Griffiths had gone away already, without Mildred, to his home in Cumberland. Mildred would be coming presently for the money. He set his teeth and read on; he tried desperately to concentrate his attention; the sentences etched themselves in his brain by the force of his effort, but they were distorted by the agony he was enduring. He wished with all his heart that he had not made the horrible proposition to give them money; but now that he had made it he lacked the strength to go back on it, not on Mildred's account, but on his own. There was a morbid obstinacy in him which forced him to do the thing he had determined. He discovered that the three pages he had read had made no impression on him at all; and he went back and started from the beginning: he found himself reading one sentence over and over again; and now it weaved itself in with his thoughts, horribly, like some formula in a nightmare. One thing he could do was to go out and keep away till midnight; they could not go then; and he saw them calling at the house every hour to ask if he was in. He enjoyed the thought of their disappointment. He repeated that sentence to himself mechanically. But he could not do that. Let them come and take the money, and he would know then to what depths of infamy it was possible for men to descend. He could not read any more now. He simply could not see the words. He leaned back in his chair, closing his eyes, and, numb with misery, waited for Mildred.

The landlady came in.

"Will you see Mrs. Miller, sir?"

"Show her in."

Philip pulled himself together to receive her without any sign of what he was feeling. He had an impulse to throw himself on his knees and seize her hands and beg her not to go; but he knew there was no way of moving her; she would tell Griffiths what he had said and how acted. He was ashamed.

"Well, how about the little jaunt?" he said gaily.

"We're going. Harry's outside. I told him you didn't want to see him, so he's kept out of your way. But he wants to know if he can come in just for a minute to say good-bye to you."

"No, I won't see him," said Philip.

He could see she did not care if he saw Griffiths or not. Now that she was there he wanted her to go quickly.

"Look here, here's the fiver. I'd like you to go now."

She took it and thanked him. She turned to leave the room.

"When are you coming back?" he asked.

"Oh, on Monday. Harry must go home then."

He knew what he was going to say was humiliating, but he was broken down with jealousy and desire.

"Then I shall see you, shan't I?"

He could not help the note of appeal in his voice.

"Of course. I'll let you know the moment I'm back."

He shook hands with her. Through the curtains he watched her jump into a four-wheeler that stood at the door. It rolled away. Then he threw himself on his bed and hid his face in his hands. He felt tears coming to his eyes, and he was angry with himself; he clenched his hands and screwed up his body to prevent them; but he could not; and great painful sobs were forced from him.

He got up at last, exhausted and ashamed, and washed his face. He mixed himself a strong whiskey and soda. It made him feel a little better. Then he caught sight of the tickets to Paris, which were on the chimney-piece, and, seizing them, with an impulse of rage he flung them in the fire. He knew he could have got the money back on them, but it relieved him to destroy them. Then he went out in search of someone to be with. The club was empty. He felt he would go mad unless he found someone to talk to; but Lawson was abroad; he went on to Hayward's rooms: the maid who opened the door told him that he had gone down to Brighton for the week-end. Then Philip went to a gallery and found it was just closing. He did not know what to do. He was

distracted. And he thought of Griffiths and Mildred going to Oxford, sitting opposite one another in the train, happy. He went back to his rooms, but they filled him with horror, he had been so wretched in them; he tried once more to read Burton's book, but, as he read, he told himself again and again what a fool he had been; it was he who had made the suggestion that they should go away, he had offered the money, he had forced it upon them; he might have known what would happen when he introduced Griffiths to Mildred; his own vehement passion was enough to arouse the other's desire. By this time they had reached Oxford. They would put up in one of the lodging-houses in John Street; Philip had never been to Oxford, but Griffiths had talked to him about it so much that he knew exactly where they would go; and they would dine at the Clarendon: Griffiths had been in the habit of dining there when he went on the spree. Philip got himself something to eat in a restaurant near Charing Cross; he had made up his mind to go to a play, and afterwards he fought his way into the pit of a theatre at which one of Oscar Wilde's pieces was being performed. He wondered if Mildred and Griffiths would go to a play that evening: they must kill the evening somehow; they were too stupid, both of them, to content themselves with conversation: he got a fierce delight in reminding himself of the vulgarity of their minds which suited them so exactly to one another. He watched the play with an abstracted mind, trying to give himself gaiety by drinking whiskey in each interval; he was unused to alcohol, and it affected him quickly, but his drunkenness was savage and morose. When the play was over he had another drink. He could not go to bed, he knew he would not sleep, and he dreaded the pictures which his vivid imagination would place before him. He tried not to think of them. He knew he had drunk too much. Now he was seized with a desire to do horrible, sordid things; he wanted to roll himself in gutters; his whole being yearned for beastliness; he wanted to grovel.

He walked up Piccadilly, dragging his club-foot, sombrely drunk, with rage and misery clawing at his heart. He was stopped by a painted harlot, who put her hand on his arm; he pushed her violently away with brutal words. He walked on a few steps and then stopped. She would do as well as another. He was sorry he had spoken so roughly to her. He went up to her.

"I say," he began.

"Go to hell," she said.

Philip laughed.

"I merely wanted to ask if you'd do me the honour of supping with me tonight."

She looked at him with amazement, and hesitated for a while. She saw he was drunk.

"I don't mind."

He was amused that she should use a phrase he had heard so often on Mildred's lips. He took her to one of the restaurants he had been in the habit of going to with Mildred. He noticed as they walked along that she looked down at his limb.

"I've got a club-foot," he said. "Have you any objection?"

"You are a cure," she laughed.

When he got home his bones were aching, and in his head there was a hammering that made him nearly scream. He took another whiskey and soda to steady himself, and going to bed sank into a dreamless sleep till mid-day.

LXXVIII

At last Monday came, and Philip thought his long torture was over. Looking out the trains he found that the latest by which Griffiths could reach home that night left Oxford soon after one, and he supposed that Mildred would take one which started a few minutes later to bring her to London. His desire was to go and meet it, but he thought Mildred would like to be left alone for a day; perhaps she would drop him a line in the evening to say she was back, and if not he would call at her lodgings next morning: his spirit was cowed. He felt a bitter hatred for Griffiths, but for Mildred, notwithstanding all that had passed, only a heart-rending desire. He was glad now that Hayward was not in London on Saturday afternoon when, distraught, he went in search of human comfort: he could not have prevented himself from telling him everything, and Hayward would have been astonished at his weakness. He would despise him, and perhaps be shocked or disgusted that he could envisage the possibility of making Mildred his mistress after she had given herself to another man. What did he care if it was shocking or disgusting? He was ready for any compromise, prepared for more degrading humiliations still, if he could only gratify his desire.

Towards the evening his steps took him against his will to the house in which she lived, and he looked up at her window. It was dark. He did not venture to ask if she was back. He was confident in her promise. But there was no letter from her in the morning, and, when about mid-day he called, the maid told him she had not arrived. He could not understand it. He knew that Griffiths would have been obliged to go home the day before, for he was to be best man at a wedding, and Mildred had no money. He turned over in his mind every possible thing that might have happened. He went again in the afternoon and left a note, asking her to dine with him that evening as calmly as though the events of the last fortnight had not happened. He mentioned the place and time at which they were to meet, and hoping against hope kept the appointment: though he waited for an hour she did not come. On Wednesday morning he was ashamed to ask at the house and sent a messenger-boy with a letter and instructions to bring back a reply; but in an hour the boy came back with Philip's

letter unopened and the answer that the lady had not returned from the country. Philip was beside himself. The last deception was more than he could bear. He repeated to himself over and over again that he loathed Mildred, and, ascribing to Griffiths this new disappointment, he hated him so much that he knew what was the delight of murder: he walked about considering what a joy it would be to come upon him on a dark night and stick a knife into his throat, just about the carotid artery, and leave him to die in the street like a dog. Philip was out of his senses with grief and rage. He did not like whiskey, but he drank to stupefy himself. He went to bed drunk on the Tuesday and on the Wednesday night.

On Thursday morning he got up very late and dragged himself, blear-eyed and sallow, into his sitting-room to see if there were any letters. A curious feeling shot through his heart when he recognised the handwriting of Griffiths.

Dear old man;

I hardly know how to write to you and yet I feel I must write. I hope you're not awfully angry with me. I know I oughtn't to have gone away with Milly, but I simply couldn't help myself. She simply carried me off my feet and I would have done anything to get her. When she told me you had offered us the money to go I simply couldn't resist. And now it's all over I'm awfully ashamed of myself and I wish I hadn't been such a fool. I wish you'd write and say you're not angry with me, and I want you to let me come and see you. I was awfully hurt at your telling Milly you didn't want to see me. Do write me a line, there's a good chap, and tell me you forgive me. It'll ease my conscience. I thought you wouldn't mind or you wouldn't have offered the money. But I know I oughtn't to have taken it. I came home on Monday and Milly wanted to stay a couple of days at Oxford by herself. She's going back to London on Wednesday, so by the time you receive this letter you will have seen her and I hope everything will go off all right. Do write and say you forgive me. Please write at once.

Yours ever,

Harry.

Philip tore up the letter furiously. He did not mean to answer it. He despised Griffiths for his apologies, he had no patience with his prickings of conscience: one could do a dastardly thing if one chose, but it was contemptible to regret it afterwards. He thought the letter cowardly and hypocritical. He was disgusted at its sentimentality.

"It would be very easy if you could do a beastly thing," he muttered to himself, "and then say you were sorry, and that put it all right again."

He hoped with all his heart he would have the chance one day to do Griffiths a bad turn.

But at all events he knew that Mildred was in town. He dressed hurriedly, not waiting to shave, drank a cup of tea, and took a cab to her rooms. The cab seemed to crawl. He was painfully anxious to see her, and unconsciously he uttered a prayer to the God he did not believe in to make her receive him kindly. He only wanted to forget. With beating heart he rang the bell. He forgot all his suffering in the passionate desire to enfold her once more in his arms.

"Is Mrs. Miller in?" he asked joyously.

"She's gone," the maid answered.

He looked at her blankly.

"She came about an hour ago and took away her things."

For a moment he did not know what to say.

"Did you give her my letter? Did she say where she was going?"

Then he understood that Mildred had deceived him again. She was not coming back to him. He made an effort to save his face

"Oh, well, I daresay I shall hear from her. She may have sent a letter to another address."

He turned away and went back hopeless to his rooms. He might have known that she would do this; she had never cared for him, she had made a fool of him from the beginning; she had no pity, she had no kindness, she had no charity. The only thing was to accept the inevitable. The pain he was suffering was horrible, he would sooner be dead than endure it; and the thought came to him that it would be better to finish with the whole thing: he might throw himself in the river or put his neck on a railway line; but he had no sooner set the thought into words than he rebelled against it. His reason told him that he would get over his unhappiness in time; if he tried with all his might he could forget her; and it would be grotesque to kill himself on account of a vulgar slut. He had only one life, and it was madness to fling it away. He *felt* that he would never overcome his passion, but he *knew* that after all it was only a matter of time.

He would not stay in London. There everything reminded him of his unhappiness. He telegraphed to his uncle that he was coming to Blackstable, and, hurrying to pack, took the first train he could. He wanted to get away from the sordid rooms in which

he had endured so much suffering. He wanted to breathe clean air. He was disgusted with himself. He felt that he was a little mad.

Since he was grown up Philip had been given the best spare room at the vicarage. It was a corner-room and in front of one window was an old tree which blocked the view, but from the other you saw, beyond the garden and the vicarage field, broad meadows. Philip remembered the wall-paper from his earliest years. On the walls were quaint water colours of the early Victorian period by a friend of the Vicar's youth. They had a faded charm. The dressing-table was surrounded by stiff muslin. There was an old tall-boy to put your clothes in. Philip gave a sigh of pleasure; he had never realised that all those things meant anything to him at all. At the vicarage life went on as it had always done. No piece of furniture had been moved from one place to another; the Vicar ate the same things, said the same things, went for the same walk every day; he had grown a little fatter, a little more silent, a little more narrow. He had become accustomed to living without his wife and missed her very little. He bickered still with Josiah Graves. Philip went to see the churchwarden. He was a little thinner, a little whiter, a little more austere; he was autocratic still and still disapproved of candles on the altar. The shops had still a pleasant quaintness; and Philip stood in front of that in which things useful to seamen were sold, sea-boots and tarpaulins and tackle, and remembered that he had felt there in his childhood the thrill of the sea and the adventurous magic of the unknown.

He could not help his heart beating at each double knock of the postman in case there might be a letter from Mildred sent on by his landlady in London; but he knew that there would be none. Now that he could think it out more calmly he understood that in trying to force Mildred to love him he had been attempting the impossible. He did not know what it was that passed from a man to a woman, from a woman to a man, and made one of them a slave: it was convenient to call it the sexual instinct; but if it was no more than that, he did not understand why it should occasion so vehement an attraction to one person rather than another. It was irresistible: the mind could not battle with it; friendship, gratitude, interest, had no power beside it. Because he had not attracted Mildred sexually, nothing that he did had any effect upon her. The idea revolted him; it made human nature beastly; and he felt suddenly that the hearts of men were full of dark places.

Because Mildred was indifferent to him he had thought her sexless; her anæmic appearance and thin lips, the body with its narrow hips and flat chest, the languor of her manner, carried out his supposition; and yet she was capable of sudden passions which made her willing to risk everything to gratify them. He had never understood her adventure with Emil Miller: it had seemed so unlike her, and she had never been able to explain it; but now that he had seen her with Griffiths he knew that just the same thing had happened then: she had been carried off her feet by an ungovernable desire. He tried to think out what those two men had which so strangely attracted her. They both had a vulgar facetiousness which tickled her simple sense of humour, and a certain coarseness of nature; but what took her perhaps was the blatant sexuality which was their most marked characteristic. She had a genteel refinement which shuddered at the facts of life, she looked upon the bodily functions as indecent, she had all sorts of euphemisms for common objects, she always chose an elaborate word as more becoming than a simple one: the brutality of these men was like a whip on her thin white shoulders, and she shuddered with voluptuous pain.

One thing Philip had made up his mind about. He would not go back to the lodgings in which he had suffered. He wrote to his landlady and gave her notice. He wanted to have his own things about him. He determined to take unfurnished rooms: it would be pleasant and cheaper; and this was an urgent consideration, for during the last year and a half he had spent nearly seven hundred pounds. He must make up for it now by the most rigid economy. Now and then he thought of the future with panic; he had been a fool to spend so much money on Mildred; but he knew that if it were to come again he would act in the same way. It amused him sometimes to consider that his friends, because he had a face which did not express his feelings very vividly and a rather slow way of moving, looked upon him as strong-minded, deliberate, and cool. They thought him reasonable and praised his common sense; but he knew that his placid expression was no more than a mask, assumed unconsciously, which acted like the protective colouring of butterflies; and himself was astonished at the weakness of his will. It seemed to him that he was swayed by every light emotion, as though he were a leaf in the wind, and when passion seized him he was powerless. He had no self-control. He merely seemed to possess it because he was indifferent to many of the things which moved other people.

He considered with some irony the philosophy which he had

developed for himself, for it had not been of much use to him in the conjuncture he had passed through; and he wondered whether thought really helped a man in any of the critical affairs of life: it seemed to him rather that he was swayed by some power alien to and yet within himself, which urged him like that great wind of Hell which drove Paolo and Francesca ceaselessly on. He thought of what he was going to do and, when the time came to act, he was powerless in the grasp of instincts, emotions, he knew not what. He acted as though he were a machine driven by the two forces of his environment and his personality; his reason was someone looking on, observing the facts but powerless to interfere: it was like those gods of Epicurus, who saw the doings of men from their empyrean heights and had no might to alter one smallest particle of what occurred.

LXXIX

Philip went up to London a couple of days before the session began in order to find himself rooms. He hunted about the streets that led out of the Westminster Bridge Road, but their dinginess was distasteful to him; and at last he found one in Kennington which had a quiet and old-world air. It reminded one a little of the London which Thackeray knew on that side of the river, and in the Kennington Road, through which the great barouche of the Newcomes must have passed as it drove the family to the West of London, the plane-trees were bursting into leaf. The houses in the street which Philip fixed upon were two-storied, and in most of the windows was a notice to state that lodgings were to let. He knocked at one which announced that the lodgings were unfurnished, and was shown by an austere, silent woman four very small rooms, in one of which there was a kitchen range and a sink. The rent was nine shillings a week. Philip did not want so many rooms, but the rent was low and he wished to settle down at once. He asked the landlady if she could keep the place clean for him and cook his breakfast, but she replied that she had enough work to do without that; and he was pleased rather than otherwise because she intimated that she wished to have nothing more to do with him than to receive his rent. She told him that, if he inquired at the grocer's round the corner, which was also a post-office, he might hear of a woman who would 'do' for him.

Philip had a little furniture which he had gathered as he went along, an arm-chair that he had bought in Paris, and a table, a few drawings, and the small Persian rug which Cronshaw had given him. His uncle had offered a fold-up bed for which, now that he no longer let his house in August, he had no further use; and by spending another ten pounds Philip bought himself whatever else was essential. He spent ten shillings on putting a corn-coloured paper in the room he was making his parlour; and he hung on the walls a sketch which Lawson had given him of the Quai des Grands Augustins, and the photograph of the *Odalisque* by Ingres and Manet's *Olympia* which in Paris had been the objects of his contemplation while he shaved. To remind himself that he too had once been engaged in the practice of art, he put up a charcoal drawing of the young Spaniard Miguel Ajuria: it was the best

thing he had ever done, a nude standing with clenched hands, his feet gripping the floor with a peculiar force, and on his face that air of determination which had been so impressive; and though Philip after the long interval saw very well the defects of his work its associations made him look upon it with tolerance. He wondered what had happened to Miguel. There is nothing so terrible as the pursuit of art by those who have no talent. Perhaps, worn out by exposure, starvation, disease, he had found an end in some hospital, or in an access of despair had sought death in the turbid Seine; but perhaps with his Southern instability he had given up the struggle of his own accord, and now, a clerk in some office in Madrid, turned his fervent rhetoric to politics and bullfighting.

Philip asked Lawson and Hayward to come and see his new rooms, and they came, one with a bottle of whiskey, the other with a *paté de foie gras;* and he was delighted when they praised his taste. He would have invited the Scotch stockbroker too, but he had only three chairs, and thus could entertain only a definite number of guests. Lawson was aware that through him Philip had become very friendly with Norah Nesbit and now remarked that he had run across her a few days before.

"She was asking how you were."

Philip flushed at the mention of her name, (he could not get himself out of the awkward habit of reddening when he was embarrassed,) and Lawson looked at him quizzically. Lawson, who now spent most of the year in London, had so far surrendered to his environment as to wear his hair short and to dress himself in a neat serge suit and a bowler hat.

"I gather that all is over between you," he said.

"I've not seen her for months."

"She was looking rather nice. She had a very smart hat on with a lot of white ostrich feathers on it. She must be doing pretty well."

Philip changed the conversation, but he kept thinking of her, and after an interval, when the three of them were talking of something else, he asked suddenly:

"Did you gather that Norah was angry with me?"

"Not a bit. She talked very nicely of you."

"I've got half a mind to go and see her."

"She won't eat you."

Philip had thought of Norah often. When Mildred left him his first thought was of her, and he told himself bitterly that she would never have treated him so. His impulse was to go to her;

he could depend on her pity; but he was ashamed: she had been good to him always, and he had treated her abominably.

"If I'd only had the sense to stick to her!" he said to himself, afterwards, when Lawson and Hayward had gone and he was smoking a last pipe before going to bed.

He remembered the pleasant hours they had spent together in the cosy sitting-room in Vincent Square, their visits to galleries and to the play, and the charming evenings of intimate conversation. He recollected her solicitude for his welfare and her interest in all that concerned him. She had loved him with a love that was kind and lasting, there was more than sensuality in it, it was almost maternal; he had always known that it was a precious thing for which with all his soul he should thank the gods. He made up his mind to throw himself on her mercy. She must have suffered horribly, but he felt she had the greatness of heart to forgive him: she was incapable of malice. Should he write to her? No. He would break in on her suddenly and cast himself at her feet—he knew that when the time came he would feel too shy to perform such a dramatic gesture, but that was how he liked to think of it—and tell her that if she would take him back she might rely on him for ever. He was cured of the hateful disease from which he had suffered, he knew her worth, and now she might trust him. His imagination leaped forward to the future. He pictured himself rowing with her on the river on Sundays; he would take her to Greenwich, he had never forgotten that delightful excursion with Hayward, and the beauty of the Port of London remained a permanent treasure in his recollection; and on the warm summer afternoons they would sit in the Park togther and talk: he laughed to himself as he remembered her gay chatter, which poured out like a brook bubbling over little stones, amusing, flippant, and full of character. The agony he had suffered would pass from his mind like a bad dream.

But when next day, about tea-time, an hour at which he was pretty certain to find Norah at home, he knocked at her door his courage suddenly failed him. Was it possible for her to forgive him? It would be abominable of him to force himself on her presence. The door was opened by a maid new since he had been in the habit of calling every day, and he inquired if Mrs. Nesbit was in.

"Will you ask her if she could see Mr. Carey?" he said. "I'll wait here."

The maid ran upstairs and in a moment clattered down again.

"Will you step up, please, sir. Second floor front."

"I know," said Philip, with a slight smile.

He went with a fluttering heart. He knocked at the door.

"Come in," said the well-known, cheerful voice.

It seemed to say come in to a new life of peace and happiness. When he entered Norah stepped forward to greet him. She shook hands with him as if they had parted the day before. A man stood up.

"Mr. Carey—Mr. Kingsford."

Philip, bitterly disappointed at not finding her alone, sat down and took stock of the stranger. He had never heard her mention his name, but he seemed to Philip to occupy his chair as though he were very much at home. He was a man of forty, clean-shaven, with long fair hair very neatly plastered down, and the reddish skin and pale, tired eyes which fair men get when their youth is passed. He had a large nose, a large mouth; the bones of his face were prominent, and he was heavily made; he was a man of more than average height, and broad-shouldered.

"I was wondering what had become of you," said Norah, in her sprightly manner. "I met Mr. Lawson the other day—did he tell you?—and I informed him that it was really high time you came to see me again."

Philip could see no shadow of embarrassment in her countenance, and he admired the ease with which she carried off an encounter of which himself felt the intense awkwardness. She gave him tea. She was about to put sugar in it when he stopped her.

"How stupid of me!" she cried. "I forgot."

He did not believe that. She must remember quite well that he never took sugar in his tea. He accepted the incident as a sign that her nonchalance was affected.

The conversation which Philip had interrupted went on, and presently he began to feel a little in the way. Kingsford took no particular notice of him. He talked fluently and well, not without humour, but with a slightly dogmatic manner: he was a journalist, it appeared, and had something amusing to say on every topic that was touched upon; but it exasperated Philip to find himself edged out of the conversation. He was determined to stay the visitor out. He wondered if he admired Norah. In the old days they had often talked of the men who wanted to flirt with her and had laughed at them together. Philip tried to bring back the conversation to matters which only he and Norah knew about, but each time the journalist broke in and succeeded in drawing it away to a subject upon which Philip was forced to be silent. He grew faintly angry with Norah, for she must see he

was being made ridiculous; but perhaps she was inflicting this upon him as a punishment, and with this thought he regained his good humour. At last, however, the clock struck six, and Kingsford got up.

"I must go," he said.

Norah shook hands with him, and accompanied him to the landing. She shut the door behind her and stood outside for a couple of minutes. Philip wondered what they were talking about.

"Who is Mr. Kingsford?" he asked cheerfully, when she returned.

"Oh, he's the editor of one of Harmsworth's Magazines. He's been taking a good deal of my work lately."

"I thought he was never going."

"I'm glad you stayed. I wanted to have a talk with you." She curled herself into the large arm-chair, feet and all, in a way her small size made possible, and lit a cigarette. He smiled when he saw her assume the attitude which had always amused him.

"You look just like a cat."

She gave him a flash of her dark, fine eyes.

"I really ought to break myself of the habit. It's absurd to behave like a child when you're my age, but I'm comfortable with my legs under me."

"It's awfully jolly to be sitting in this room again," said Philip happily. "You don't know how I've missed it."

"Why on earth didn't you come before?" she asked gaily.

"I was afraid to," he said, reddening.

She gave him a look full of kindness. Her lips outlined a charming smile.

"You needn't have been."

He hesitated for a moment. His heart beat quickly.

"D'you remember the last time we met? I treated you awfully badly—I'm dreadfully ashamed of myself."

She looked at him steadily. She did not answer. He was losing his head; he seemed to have come on an errand of which he was only now realising the outrageousness. She did not help him, and he could only blurt out bluntly:

"Can you ever forgive me?"

Then impetuously he told her that Mildred had left him and that his unhappiness had been so great that he almost killed himself. He told her of all that had happened between them, of the birth of the child, and of the meeting with Griffiths, of his folly and his trust and his immense deception. He told her how often he had thought of her kindness and of her love, and how bitterly

he had regretted throwing it away: he had only been happy when he was with her, and he knew now how great was her worth. His voice was hoarse with emotion. Sometimes he was so ashamed of what he was saying that he spoke with his eyes fixed on the ground. His face was distorted with pain, and yet he felt it a strange relief to speak. At last he finished. He flung himself back in his chair, exhausted, and waited. He had concealed nothing, and even, in his self-abasement, he had striven to make himself more despicable than he had really been. He was surprised that she did not speak, and at last he raised his eyes. She was not looking at him. Her face was quite white, and she seemed to be lost in thought.

"Haven't you got anything to say to me?"

She started and reddened.

"I'm afraid you've had a rotten time," she said. "I'm dreadfully sorry."

She seemed about to go on, but she stopped, and again he waited. At length she seemed to force herself to speak.

"I'm engaged to be married to Mr. Kingsford."

"Why didn't you tell me at once?" he cried. "You needn't have allowed me to humiliate myself before you."

"I'm sorry, I couldn't stop you. . . . I met him soon after you"—she seemed to search for an expression that should not wound him—"told me your friend had come back. I was very wretched for a bit, he was extremely kind to me. He knew someone had made me suffer, of course he doesn't know it was you, and I don't know what I should have done without him. And suddenly I felt I couldn't go on working, working, working; I was so tired, I felt so ill. I told him about my husband. He offered to give me the money to get my divorce if I would marry him as soon as I could. He had a very good job, and it wouldn't be necessary for me to do anything unless I wanted to. He was so fond of me and so anxious to take care of me. I was awfully touched. And now I'm very, very fond of him."

"Have you got your divorce then?" asked Philip.

"I've got the decree nisi. It'll be made absolute in July, and then we are going to be married at once."

For some time Philip did not say anything.

"I wish I hadn't made such a fool of myself," he muttered at length.

He was thinking of his long, humiliating confession. She looked at him curiously.

"You were never really in love with me," she said.

"It's not very pleasant being in love."

But he was always able to recover himself quickly, and, getting up now and holding out his hand, he said:

"I hope you'll be very happy. After all, it's the best thing that could have happened to you."

She looked a little wistfully at him as she took his hand and held it.

"You'll come and see me again, won't you?" she asked.

"No," he said, shaking his head. "It would make me too envious to see you happy."

He walked slowly away from her house. After all she was right when she said he had never loved her. He was disappointed, irritated even, but his vanity was more affected than his heart. He knew that himself. And presently he grew conscious that the gods had played a very good practical joke on him, and he laughed at himself mirthlessly. It is not very comfortable to have the gift of being amused at one's own absurdity.

LXXX

For the next three months Philip worked on subjects which were new to him. The unwieldy crowd which had entered the Medical School nearly two years before had thinned out: some had left the hospital, finding the examinations more difficult to pass than they expected, some had been taken away by parents who had not foreseen the expense of life in London, and some had drifted away to other callings. One youth whom Philip knew had devised an ingenious plan to make money; he had bought things at sales and pawned them, but presently found it more profitable to pawn goods bought on credit; and it had caused a little excitement at the hospital when someone pointed out his name in police-court proceedings. There had been a remand, then assurances on the part of a harassed father, and the young man had gone out to bear the White Man's Burden overseas. The imagination of another, a lad who had never before been in a town at all, fell to the glamour of music-halls and bar parlours; he spent his time among racing-men, tipsters, and trainers, and now was become a book-maker's clerk. Philip had seen him once in a bar near Piccadilly Circus in a tight-waisted coat and a brown hat with a broad, flat brim. A third, with a gift for singing and mimicry, who had achieved success at the smoking concerts of the Medical School by his imitation of notorious comedians, had abandoned the hospital for the chorus of a musical comedy. Still another, and he interested Philip because his uncouth manner and interjectional speech did not suggest that he was capable of any deep emotion, had felt himself stifle among the houses of London. He grew haggard in shut-in spaces, and the soul he knew not he possessed struggled like a sparrow held in the hand, with little frightened gasps and a quick palpitation of the heart: he yearned for the broad skies and the open, desolate places among which his childhood had been spent; and he walked off one day, without a word to anybody, between one lecture and another; and the next thing his friends heard was that he had thrown up medicine and was working on a farm.

Philip attended now lectures on medicine and on surgery. On certain mornings in the week he practised bandaging on out-patients glad to earn a little money, and he was taught auscultation and how to use the stethoscope. He learned dispensing. He was

taking the examination in *Materia Medica* in July, and it amused him to play with various drugs, concocting mixtures, rolling pills, and making ointments. He seized avidly upon anything from which he could extract a suggestion of human interest.

He saw Griffiths once in the distance, but, not to have the pain of cutting him dead, avoided him. Philip had felt a certain self-consciousness with Griffiths' friends, some of whom were now friends of his, when he realised they knew of his quarrel with Griffiths and surmised they were aware of the reason. One of them, a very tall fellow, with a small head and a languid air, a youth called Ramsden, who was one of Griffiths' most faithful admirers, copied his ties, his boots, his manner of talking and his gestures, told Philip that Griffiths was very much hurt because Philip had not answered his letter. He wanted to be reconciled with him.

"Has he asked you to give me the message?" asked Philip.

"Oh, no, I'm saying this entirely on my own," said Ramsden. "He's awfully sorry for what he did, and he says you always behaved like a perfect brick to him. I know he'd be glad to make it up. He doesn't come to the hospital because he's afraid of meeting you, and he thinks you'd cut him."

"I should."

"It makes him feel rather wretched, you know."

"I can bear the trifling inconvenience that he feels with a good deal of fortitude," said Philip.

"He'll do anything he can to make it up."

"How childish and hysterical! Why should he care? I'm a very insignificant person, and he can do very well without my company. I'm not interested in him any more."

Ramsden thought Philip hard and cold. He paused for a moment or two, looking about him in a perplexed way.

"Harry wishes to God he'd never had anything to do with the woman."

"Does he?" asked Philip.

He spoke with an indifference which he was satisfied with. No one could have guessed how violently his heart was beating. He waited impatiently for Ramsden to go on.

"I suppose you've quite got over it now, haven't you?"

"I?" said Philip. "Quite."

Little by little he discovered the history of Mildred's relations with Griffiths. He listened with a smile on his lips, feigning an equanimity which quite deceived the dull-witted boy who talked to him. The week-end she spent with Griffiths at Oxford inflamed rather than extinguished her sudden passion; and when Griffiths

went home, with a feeling that was unexpected in her she determined to stay in Oxford by herself for a couple of days, because she had been so happy in it. She felt that nothing could induce her to go back to Philip. He revolted her. Griffiths was taken aback at the fire he had aroused, for he had found his two days with her in the country somewhat tedious; and he had no desire to turn an amusing episode into a tiresome affair. She made him promise to write to her, and, being an honest, decent fellow, with natural politeness and a desire to make himself pleasant to everybody, when he got home he wrote her a long and charming letter. She answered it with reams of passion, clumsy, for she had no gift of expression, ill-written, and vulgar; the letter bored him, and when it was followed next day by another, and the day after by a third, he began to think her love no longer flattering but alarming. He did not answer; and she bombarded him with telegrams, asking him if he were ill and had received her letters; she said his silence made her dreadfully anxious. He was forced to write, but he sought to make his reply as casual as was possible without being offensive: he begged her not to wire, since it was difficult to explain telegrams to his mother, an old-fashioned person for whom a telegram was still an event to excite tremor. She answered by return of post that she must see him and announced her intention to pawn things (she had the dressing-case which Philip had given her as a wedding-present and could raise eight pounds on that) in order to come up and stay at the market town four miles from which was the village in which his father practised. This frightened Griffiths; and he, this time, made use of the telegraph wires to tell her that she must do nothing of the kind. He promised to let her know the moment he came up to London, and, when he did, found that she had already been asking for him at the hospital at which he had an appointment. He did not like this, and, on seeing her, told Mildred that she was not to come there on any pretext; and now, after an absence of three weeks, he found that she bored him quite decidedly; he wondered why he had ever troubled about her, and made up his mind to break with her as soon as he could. He was a person who dreaded quarrels, nor did he want to give pain; but at the same time he had other things to do, and he was quite determined not to let Mildred bother him. When he met her he was pleasant, cheerful, amusing, affectionate; he invented convincing excuses for the interval since last he had seen her; but he did everything he could to avoid her. When she forced him to make appointments he sent telegrams to her at the last moment to put

himself off; and his landlady (the first three months of his appointment he was spending in rooms) had orders to say he was out when Mildred called. She would waylay him in the street and, knowing she had been waiting about for him to come out of the hospital for a couple of hours, he would give her a few charming, friendly words and bolt off with the excuse that he had a business engagement. He grew very skilful in slipping out of the hospital unseen. Once, when he went back to his lodgings at midnight, he saw a woman standing at the area railings and suspecting who it was went to beg a shake-down in Ramsden's rooms; next day the landlady told him that Mildred had sat crying on the doorstep for hours, and she had been obliged to tell her at last that if she did not go away she would send for a policeman.

"I tell you, my boy," said Ramsden, "you're jolly well out of it. Harry says that if he'd suspected for half a second she was going to make such a blooming nuisance of herself he'd have seen himself damned before he had anything to do with her."

Philip thought of her sitting on that doorstep through the long hours of the night. He saw her face as she looked up dully at the landlady who sent her away.

"I wonder what she's doing now."

"Oh, she's got a job somewhere, thank God. That keeps her busy all day."

The last thing he heard, just before the end of the summer session, was that Griffiths' urbanity had given way at length under the exasperation of the constant persecution. He had told Mildred that he was sick of being pestered, and she had better take herself off and not bother him again.

"It was the only thing he could do," said Ramsden. "It was getting a bit too thick."

"Is it all over then?" asked Philip.

"Oh, he hasn't seen her for ten days. You know, Harry's wonderful at dropping people. This is about the toughest nut he's ever had to crack, but he's cracked it all right."

Then Philip heard nothing more of her at all. She vanished into the vast anonymous mass of the population of London.

LXXXI

At the beginning of the winter session Philip became an out-patients' clerk. There were three assistant-physicians who took out-patients, two days a week each, and Philip put his name down for Dr. Tyrell. He was popular with the students, and there was some competition to be his clerk. Dr. Tyrell was a tall, thin man of thirty-five, with a very small head, red hair cut short, and prominent blue eyes: his face was bright scarlet. He talked well in a pleasant voice, was fond of a little joke, and treated the world lightly. He was a successful man, with a large consulting practice and a knighthood in prospect. From commerce with students and poor people he had the patronising air, and from dealing always with the sick he had the healthy man's jovial condescension which some consultants achieve as the professional manner. He made the patient feel like a boy confronted by a jolly schoolmaster; his illness was an absurd piece of naughtiness which amused rather than irritated.

The student was supposed to attend in the out-patients' room every day, see cases, and pick up what information he could; but on the days on which he clerked his duties were a little more definite. At that time the out-patients' department at St. Luke's consisted of three rooms, leading into one another, and a large, dark waiting-room with massive pillars of masonry and long benches. Here the patients waited after having been given their 'letters' at mid-day; and the long rows of them, bottles and gallipots in hand, some tattered and dirty, others decent enough, sitting in the dimness, men and women of all ages, children, gave one an impression which was weird and horrible. They suggested the grim drawings of Daumier. All the rooms were painted alike, in salmon-colour with a high dado of maroon; and there was in them an odour of disinfectants, mingling as the afternoon wore on with the crude stench of humanity. The first room was the largest and in the middle of it were a table and an office chair for the physician; on each side of this were two smaller tables, a little lower: at one of these sat the house-physician and at the other the clerk who took the 'book' for the day. This was a large volume in which were written down the name, age, sex, profession, of the patient and the diagnosis of his disease.

At half past one the house-physician came in, rang the bell, and told the porter to send in the old patients. There were always a good many of these, and it was necessary to get through as many of them as possible before Dr. Tyrell came at two. The H.P. with whom Philip came in contact was a dapper little man, excessively conscious of his importance: he treated the clerks with condescension and patently resented the familiarity of older students who had been his contemporaries and did not use him with the respect he felt his present position demanded. He set about the cases. A clerk helped him. The patients streamed in. The men came first. Chronic bronchitis, "a nasty 'acking cough," was what they chiefly suffered from; one went to the H.P. and the other to the clerk, handing in their letters: if they were going on well the words *Rep 14* were written on them, and they went to the dispensary with their bottles or gallipots in order to have medicine given them for fourteen days more. Some old stagers held back so that they might be seen by the physician himself, but they seldom succeeded in this; and only three or four, whose condition seemed to demand his attention, were kept.

Dr. Tyrell came in with quick movements and a breezy manner. He reminded one slightly of a clown leaping into the arena of a circus with the cry: Here we are again. His air seemed to indicate: What's all this nonsense about being ill? I'll soon put that right. He took his seat, asked if there were any old patients for him to see, rapidly passed them in review, looking at them with shrewd eyes as he discussed their symptoms, cracked a joke (at which all the clerks laughed heartily) with the H.P., who laughed heartily too but with an air as if he thought it was rather impudent for the clerks to laugh, remarked that it was a fine day or a hot one, and rang the bell for the porter to show in the new patients.

They came in one by one and walked up to the table at which sat Dr. Tyrell. They were old men and young men and middle-aged men, mostly of the labouring class, dock labourers, draymen, factory hands, barmen; but some, neatly dressed, were of a station which was obviously superior, shop-assistants, clerks, and the like. Dr. Tyrell looked at these with suspicion. Sometimes they put on shabby clothes in order to pretend they were poor; but he had a keen eye to prevent what he regarded as fraud and sometimes refused to see people who, he thought, could well pay for medical attendance. Women were the worst offenders and they managed the thing more clumsily. They would wear a cloak and a skirt

which were almost in rags, and neglect to take the rings off their fingers.

"If you can afford to wear jewellery you can afford a doctor. A hospital is a charitable institution," said Dr. Tyrell.

He handed back the letter and called for the next case.

"But I've got my letter."

"I don't care a hang about your letter; you get out. You've got no business to come and steal the time which is wanted by the really poor."

The patient retired sulkily, with an angry scowl.

"She'll probably write a letter to the papers on the gross mismanagement of the London hospitals," said Dr. Tyrell, with a smile, as he took the next paper and gave the patient one of his shrewd glances.

Most of them were under the impression that the hospital was an institution of the state, for which they paid out of the rates, and took the attendance they received as a right they could claim. They imagined the physician who gave them his time was heavily paid.

Dr. Tyrell gave each of his clerks a case to examine. The clerk took the patient into one of the inner rooms; they were smaller, and each had a couch in it covered with black horse-hair: he asked his patient a variety of questions, examined his lungs, his heart, and his liver, made notes of fact on the hospital letter, formed in his own mind some idea of the diagnosis, and then waited for Dr. Tyrell to come in. This he did, followed by a small crowd of students, when he had finished the men, and the clerk read out what he had learned. The physician asked him one or two questions, and examined the patient himself. If there was anything interesting to hear students applied their stethoscope: you would see a man with two or three to the chest, and two perhaps to his back, while others waited impatiently to listen. The patient stood among them a little embarrassed, but not altogether displeased to find himself the centre of attention: he listened confusedly while Dr. Tyrell discoursed glibly on the case. Two or three students listened again to recognise the murmur or the crepitation which the physician described, and then the man was told to put on his clothes.

When the various cases had been examined Dr. Tyrell went back into the large room and sat down again at his desk. He asked any student who happened to be standing near him what he would prescribe for a patient he had just seen. The student mentioned one or two drugs.

"Would you?" said Dr. Tyrell. "Well, that's original at all events. I don't think we'll be rash."

This always made the students laugh, and with a twinkle of amusement at his own bright humour the physician prescribed some other drug than that which the student had suggested. When there were two cases of exactly the same sort and the student proposed the treatment which the physician had ordered for the first, Dr. Tyrell exercised considerable ingenuity in thinking of something else. Sometimes, knowing that in the dispensary they were worked off their legs and preferred to give the medicines which they had all ready, the good hospital mixtures which had been found by the experience of years to answer their purpose so well, he amused himself by writing an elaborate prescription.

"We'll give the dispenser something to do. If we go on prescribing *mist: alb:* he'll lose his cunning."

The students laughed, and the doctor gave them a circular glance of enjoyment in his joke. Then he touched the bell and, when the porter poked his head in, said:

"Old women, please."

He leaned back in his chair, chatting with the H.P. while the porter herded along the old patients. They came in, strings of anæmic girls, with large fringes and pallid lips, who could not digest their bad, insufficient food; old ladies, fat and thin, aged prematurely by frequent confinements, with winter coughs; women with this, that, and the other, the matter with them. Dr. Tyrell and his house-physician got through them quickly. Time was getting on, and the air in the small room was growing more sickly, The physician looked at his watch.

"Are there many new women to-day?" he asked.

"A good few, I think," said the H.P.

"We'd better have them in. You can go on with the old ones."

They entered. With the men the most common ailments were due to the excessive use of alcohol, but with the women they were due to defective nourishment. By about six o'clock they were finished. Philip, exhausted by standing all the time, by the bad air, and by the attention he had given, strolled over with his fellow-clerks to the Medical School to have tea. He found the work of absorbing interest. There was humanity there in the rough, the materials the artist worked on; and Philip felt a curious thrill when it occurred to him that he was in the position of the artist and the patients were like clay in his hands. He remembered with an amused shrug of the shoulders his life in Paris, absorbed in colour,

tone, values, Heaven knows what, with the aim of producing beautiful things: the directness of contact with men and women gave a thrill of power which he had never known. He found an endless excitement in looking at their faces and hearing them speak; they came in each with his peculiarity, some shuffling uncouthly, some with a little trip, others with heavy, slow tread, some shyly. Often you could guess their trades by the look of them. You learnt in what way to put your questions so that they should be understood, you discovered on what subjects nearly all lied, and by what inquiries you could extort the truth notwithstanding. You saw the different way people took the same things. The diagnosis of dangerous illness would be accepted by one with a laugh and a joke, by another with dumb despair. Philip found that he was less shy with these people than he had ever been with others; he felt not exactly sympathy, for sympathy suggests condescension; but he felt at home with them. He found that he was able to put them at their ease, and, when he had been given a case to find out what he could about it, it seemed to him that the patient delivered himself into his hands with a peculiar confidence.

"Perhaps," he thought to himself, with a smile, "perhaps I'm cut out to be a doctor. It would be rather a lark if I'd hit upon the one thing I'm fit for."

It seemed to Philip that he alone of the clerks saw the dramatic interest of those afternoons. To the others men and women were only cases, good if they were complicated, tiresome if obvious; they heard murmurs and were astonished at abnormal livers; an unexpected sound in the lungs gave them something to talk about. But to Philip there was much more. He found an interest in just looking at them, in the shape of their heads and their hands, in the look of their eyes and the length of their noses. You saw in that room human nature taken by surprise, and often the mask of custom was torn off rudely, showing you the soul all raw. Sometimes you saw an untaught stoicism which was profoundly moving. Once Philip saw a man, rough and illiterate, told his case was hopeless; and, self-controlled himself, he wondered at the splendid instinct which forced the fellow to keep a stiff upper-lip before strangers. But was it possible for him to be brave when he was by himself, face to face with his soul, or would he then surrender to despair? Sometimes there was tragedy. Once a young woman brought her sister to be examined, a girl of eighteen, with delicate features and large blue eyes, fair hair that sparkled with gold when a ray of autumn sunshine touched it for a moment, and a skin of amazing beauty. The students' eyes went to her

with little smiles. They did not often see a pretty girl in these dingy rooms. The elder woman gave the family history, father and mother had died of phthisis, a brother and a sister, these two were the only ones left. The girl had been coughing lately and losing weight. She took off her blouse and the skin of her neck was like milk. Dr. Tyrell examined her quietly, with his usual rapid method; he told two or three of the clerks to apply their stethoscopes to a place he indicated with his finger; and then she was allowed to dress. The sister was standing a little apart and she spoke to him in a low voice, so that the girl should not hear. Her voice trembled with fear.

"She hasn't got it, doctor, has she?"

"I'm afraid there's no doubt about it."

"She was the last one. When she goes I shan't have anybody."

She began to cry, while the doctor looked at her gravely; he thought she too had the type; she would not make old bones either. The girl turned round and saw her sister's tears. She understood what they meant. The colour fled from her lovely face and tears fell down her cheeks. The two stood for a minute or two, crying silently, and then the older, forgetting the indifferent crowd that watched them, went up to her, took her in her arms, and rocked her gently to and fro as if she were a baby.

When they were gone a student asked:

"How long d'you think she'll last, sir?"

Dr. Tyrell shrugged his shoulders.

"Her brother and sister died within three months of the first symptoms. She'll do the same. If they were rich one might do something. You can't tell these people to go to St. Moritz. Nothing can be done for them."

Once a man who was strong and in all the power of his manhood came because a persistent aching troubled him and his club-doctor did not seem to do him any good; and the verdict for him too was death, not the inevitable death that horrified and yet was tolerable because science was helpless before it, but the death which was inevitable because the man was a little wheel in the great machine of a complex civilisation, and had as little power of changing the circumstances as an automaton. Complete rest was his only chance. The physician did not ask impossibilities.

"You ought to get some very much lighter job."

"There ain't no light jobs in my business."

"Well, if you go on like this you'll kill yourself. You're very ill."

"D'you mean to say I'm going to die?"

"I shouldn't like to say that, but you're certainly unfit for hard work."

"If I don't work who's to keep the wife and the kids?"

Dr. Tyrell shrugged his shoulders. The dilemma had been presented to him a hundred times. Time was pressing and there were many patients to be seen.

"Well, I'll give you some medicine and you can come back in a week and tell me how you're getting on."

The man took his letter with the useless prescription written upon it and walked out. The doctor might say what he liked. He did not feel so bad that he could not go on working. He had a good job and he could not afford to throw it away.

"I give him a year," said Dr. Tyrell.

Sometimes there was comedy. Now and then came a flash of cockney humour, now and then some old lady, a character such as Charles Dickens might have drawn, would amuse them by her garrulous oddities. Once a woman came who was a member of the ballet at a famous music-hall. She looked fifty, but gave her age as twenty-eight. She was outrageously painted and ogled the students impudently with large black eyes; her smiles were grossly alluring. She had abundant self-confidence and treated Dr. Tyrell, vastly amused, with the easy familiarity with which she might have used an intoxicated admirer. She had chronic bronchitis, and told him it hindered her in the exercise of her profession.

"I don't know why I should 'ave such a thing, upon my word I don't. I've never 'ad a day's illness in my life. You've only got to look at me to know that."

She rolled her eyes round the young men, with a long sweep of her painted eyelashes, and flashed her yellow teeth at them. She spoke with a cockney accent, but with an affectation of refinement which made every word a feast of fun.

"It's what they call a winter cough," answered Dr. Tyrell gravely. "A great many middle-aged women have it."

"Well, I never! That is a nice thing to say to a lady. No one ever called me middle-aged before."

She opened her eyes very wide and cocked her head on one side, looking at him with indescribable archness.

"That is the disadvantage of our profession," said he. "It forces us sometimes to be ungallant."

She took the prescription and gave him one last, luscious smile.

"You will come and see me dance, dearie, won't you?"

"I will indeed."

He rang the bell for the next case.

"I am glad you gentlemen were here to protect me."

But on the whole the impression was neither of tragedy nor of comedy. There was no describing it. It was manifold and various; there were tears and laughter, happiness and woe; it was tedious and interesting and indifferent; it was as you saw it: it was tumultuous and passionate; it was grave; it was sad and comic; it was trivial; it was simple and complex; joy was there and despair; the love of mothers for their children, and of men for women; lust trailed itself through the rooms with leaden feet, punishing the guilty and the innocent, helpless wives and wretched children; drink seized men and women and cost its inevitable price; death sighed in these rooms; and the beginning of life, filling some poor girl with terror and shame, was diagnosed there. There was neither good nor bad there. There were just facts. It was life.

LXXXII

Towards the end of the year, when Philip was bringing to a close his three months as clerk in the out-patients' department, he received a letter from Lawson, who was in Paris.

Dear Philip,

Cronshaw is in London and would be glad to see you. He is living at 43 Hyde Street, Soho. I don't know where it is, but I daresay you will be able to find out. Be a brick and look after him a bit. He is very down on his luck. He will tell you what he is doing. Things are going on here very much as usual. Nothing seems to have changed since you were here. Clutton is back, but he has become quite impossible. He has quarrelled with everybody. As far as I can make out he hasn't got a cent, he lives in a little studio right away beyond the Jardin des Planies, but he won't let anybody see his work. He doesn't show anywhere, so one doesn't know what he is doing. He may be a genius, but on the other hand he may be off his head. By the way, I ran against Flanagan the other day. He was showing Mrs. Flanagan round the Quarter. He has chucked art and is now in popper's business. He seems to be rolling. Mrs. Flanagan is very pretty and I'm trying to work a portrait. How much would you ask if you were me? I don't want to frighten them, and then on the other hand I don't want to be such an ass as to ask £150 if they're quite willing to give £300.

Yours ever,
Frederick Lawson.

Philip wrote to Cronshaw and received in reply the following letter. It was written on a half-sheet of common note-paper, and the flimsy envelope was dirtier than was justified by its passage through the post.

Dear Carey,

Of course I remember you very well. I have an idea that I had some part in rescuing you from the Slough of Despond in which myself am hopelessly immersed. I shall be glad to see you. I am a stranger in a strange city and I am buffeted by the philistines. It will be pleasant to talk of Paris. I do not ask you to come and

see me, since my lodging is not of a magnificence fit for the reception of an eminent member of Monsieur Purgon's profession, but you will find me eating modestly any evening between seven and eight at a restaurant yclept Au Bon Plaisir in Dean Street.

Your sincere

J. Cronshaw.

Philip went the day he received this letter. The restaurant, consisting of one small room, was of the poorest class, and Cronshaw seemed to be its only customer. He was sitting in the corner, well away from draughts, wearing the same shabby great-coat which Philip had never seen him without, with his old bowler on his head.

"I eat here because I can be alone," he said. "They are not doing well; the only people who come are a few trollops and one or two waiters out of a job; they are giving up business, and the food is execrable. But the ruin of their fortunes is my advantage."

Cronshaw had before him a glass of absinthe. It was nearly three years since they had met, and Philip was shocked by the change in his appearance. He had been rather corpulent, but now he had a dried-up, yellow look: the skin of his neck was loose and wrinkled; his clothes hung about him as though they had been bought for someone else; and his collar, three or four sizes too large, added to the slatternliness of his appearance. His hands trembled continually. Philip remembered the handwriting which scrawled over the page with shapeless, haphazard letters. Cronshaw was evidently very ill.

"I eat little these days," he said. "I'm very sick in the mornings. I'm just having some soup for my dinner, and then I shall have a bit of cheese."

Philip's glance unconsciously went to the absinthe, and Cronshaw, seeing it, gave him the quizzical look with which he reproved the admonitions of common sense.

"You have diagnosed my case, and you think it's very wrong of me to drink absinthe."

"You've evidently got cirrhosis of the liver," said Philip.

"Evidently."

He looked at Philip in the way which had formerly had the power of making him feel incredibly narrow. It seemed to point out that what he was thinking was distressingly obvious; and when you have agreed with the obvious what more is there to say? Philip changed the topic.

"When are you going back to Paris?"

"I'm not going back to Paris. I'm going to die."

The very naturalness with which he said this startled Philip. He thought of half a dozen things to say, but they seemed futile. He knew that Cronshaw was a dying man.

"Are you going to settle in London then?" he asked lamely.

"What is London to me? I am a fish out of water. I walk through the crowded streets, men jostle me, and I seem to walk in a dead city. I felt that I couldn't die in Paris. I wanted to die among my own people. I don't know what hidden instinct drew me back at the last."

Philip knew of the woman Cronshaw had lived with and the two draggle-tailed children, but Cronshaw had never mentioned them to him, and he did not like to speak of them. He wondered what had happened to them.

"I don't know why you talk of dying," he said.

"I had pneumonia a couple of winters ago, and they told me then it was a miracle that I came through. It appears I'm extremely liable to it, and another bout will kill me."

"Oh, what nonsense! You're not so bad as all that. You've only got to take precautions. Why don't you give up drinking?"

"Because I don't choose. It doesn't matter what a man does if he's ready to take the consequences. Well, I'm ready to take the consequences. You talk glibly of giving up drinking, but it's the only thing I've got left now. What do you think life would be to me without it? Can you understand the happiness I get out of my absinthe? I yearn for it; and when I drink it I savour every drop, and afterwards I feel my soul swimming in ineffable happiness. It disgusts you. You are a puritan and in your heart you despise sensual pleasures. Sensual pleasures are the most violent and the most exquisite. I am a man blessed with vivid senses, and I have indulged them with all my soul. I have to pay the penalty now, and I am ready to pay."

Philip looked at him for a while steadily.

"Aren't you afraid?"

For a moment Cronshaw did not answer. He seemed to consider his reply.

"Sometimes, when I'm alone." He looked at Philip. "You think that's a condemnation? You're wrong. I'm not afraid of my fear. It's folly, the Christian argument that you should live always in view of your death. The only way to live is to forget that you're going to die. Death is unimportant. The fear of it should never influence a single action of the wise man. I know that

I shall die struggling for breath, and I know that I shall be horribly afraid, I know that I shall not be able to keep myself from regretting bitterly the life that has brought me to such a pass; but I disown that regret. I now, weak, old, diseased, poor, dying, hold still my soul in my hands, and I regret nothing."

"D'you remember that Persian carpet you gave me?" asked Philip.

Cronshaw smiled his old, slow smile of past days.

"I told you that it would give you an answer to your question when you asked me what was the meaning of life. Well, have you discovered the answer?"

"No," smiled Philip. "Won't you tell it me?"

"No, no, I can't do that. The answer is meaningless unless you discover it for yourself."

LXXXIII

Cronshaw was publishing his poems. His friends had been urging him to do this for years, but his laziness made it impossible for him to take the necessary steps. He had always answered their exhortations by telling them that the love of poetry was dead in England. You brought out a book which had cost you years of thought and labour; it was given two or three contemptuous lines among a batch of similar volumes, twenty or thirty copies were sold, and the rest of the edition was pulped. He had long since worn out the desire for fame. That was an illusion like all else. But one of his friends had taken the matter into his own hands. This was a man of letters, named Leonard Upjohn, whom Philip had met once or twice with Cronshaw in the cafés of the Quarter. He had a considerable reputation in England as a critic and was the accredited exponent in this country of modern French literature. He had lived a good deal in France among the men who made the *Mercure de France* the liveliest review of the day, and by the simple process of expressing in English their point of view he had acquired in England a reputation for originality. Philip had read some of his articles. He had formed a style for himself by a close imitation of Sir Thomas Browne; he used elaborate sentences, carefully balanced, and obsolete, resplendent words: it gave his writing an appearance of individuality. Leonard Upjohn had induced Cronshaw to give him all his poems and found that there were enough to make a volume of reasonable size. He promised to use his influence with publishers. Cronshaw was in want of money. Since his illness he had found it more difficult than ever to work steadily; he made barely enough to keep himself in liquor; and when Upjohn wrote to him that this publisher and the other, though admiring the poems, thought it not worth while to publish them, Cronshaw began to grow interested. He wrote impressing upon Upjohn his great need and urging him to make more strenuous efforts. Now that he was going to die he wanted to leave behind him a published book, and at the back of his mind was the feeling that he had produced great poetry. He expected to burst upon the world like a new star. There was something fine in keeping to himself these treasures of beauty all his life and giving them to

the world disdainfully when, he and the world parting company, he had no further use for them.

His decision to come to England was caused directly by an announcement from Leonard Upjohn that a publisher had consented to print the poems. By a miracle of persuasion Upjohn had persuaded him to give ten pounds in advance of royalties.

"In advance of royalties, mind you," said Cronshaw to Philip. "Milton only got ten pounds down."

Upjohn had promised to write a signed article about them, and he would ask his friends who reviewed to do their best. Cronshaw pretended to treat the matter with detachment, but it was easy to see that he was delighted with the thought of the stir he would make.

One day Philip went to dine by arrangement at the wretched eating-house at which Cronshaw insisted on taking his meals, but Cronshaw did not appear. Philip learned that he had not been there for three days. He got himself something to eat and went round to the address from which Cronshaw had first written to him. He had some difficulty in finding Hyde Street. It was a street of dingy houses huddled together; many of the windows had been broken and were clumsily repaired with strips of French newspaper; the doors had not been painted for years; there were shabby little shops on the ground floor, laundries, cobblers, stationers. Ragged children played in the road, and an old barrel-organ was grinding out a vulgar tune. Philip knocked at the door of Cronshaw's house, (there was a shop of cheap sweetstuffs at the bottom,) and it was opened by an elderly Frenchwoman in a dirty apron. Philip asked her if Cronshaw was in.

"Ah, yes, there is an Englishman who lives at the top, at the back. I don't know if he's in. If you want him you had better go up and see."

The staircase was lit by one jet of gas. There was a revolting odour in the house. When Philip was passing up a woman came out of a room on the first floor, looked at him suspiciously, but made no remark. There were three doors on the top landing. Philip knocked at one, and knocked again; there was no reply; he tried the handle, but the door was locked. He knocked at another door, got no answer, and tried the door again. It opened. The room was dark.

"Who's that?"

He recognised Cronshaw's voice.

"Carey. Can I come in?"

He received no answer. He walked in. The window was closed

and the stink was overpowering. There was a certain amount of light from the arc-lamp in the street, and he saw that it was a small room with two beds in it, end to end; there was a washing-stand and one chair, but they left little space for anyone to move in. Cronshaw was in the bed nearest the window. He made no movement, but gave a low chuckle.

"Why don't you light the candle?" he said then.

Philip struck a match and discovered that there was a candlestick on the floor beside the bed. He lit it and put it on the washing-stand. Cronshaw was lying on his back immobile; he looked very odd in his nightshirt; and his baldness was disconcerting. His face was earthy and deathlike.

"I say, old man, you look awfully ill. Is there anyone to look after you here?"

"George brings me in a bottle of milk in the morning before he goes to his work."

"Who's George?"

"I call him George because his name is Adolphe. He shares this palatial apartment with me."

Philip noticed then that the second bed had not been made since it was slept in. The pillow was black where the head had rested.

"You don't mean to say you're sharing this room with somebody else?" he cried.

"Why not? Lodging costs money in Soho. George is a waiter, he goes out at eight in the morning and does not come in till closing time, so he isn't in my way at all. We neither of us sleep well, and he helps to pass away the hours of the night by telling me stories of his life. He's a Swiss, and I've always had a taste for waiters. They see life from an entertaining angle."

"How long have you been in bed?"

"Three days."

"D'you mean to say you've had nothing but a bottle of milk for the last three days? Why on earth didn't you send me a line? I can't bear to think of you lying here all day long without a soul to attend to you."

Cronshaw gave a little laugh.

"Look at your face. Why, dear boy, I really believe you're distressed. You nice fellow."

Philip blushed. He had not suspected that his face showed the dismay he felt at the sight of that horrible room and the wretched circumstances of the poor poet. Cronshaw, watching Philip, went on with a gentle smile.

"I've been quite happy. Look, here are my proofs. Remember

that I am indifferent to discomforts which would harass other folk. What do the circumstances of life matter if your dreams make you lord paramount of time and space?"

The proofs were lying on his bed, and as he lay in the darkness he had been able to place his hands on them. He showed them to Philip and his eyes glowed. He turned over the pages, rejoicing in the clear type; he read out a stanza.

"They don't look bad, do they?"

Philip had an idea. It would involve him in a little expense and he could not afford even the smallest increase of expenditure; but on the other hand this was a case where it revolted him to think of economy.

"I say, I can't bear the thought of your remaining here. I've got an extra room, it's empty at present, but I can easily get someone to lend me a bed. Won't you come and live with me for a while? It'll save you the rent of this."

"Oh, my dear boy, you'd insist on my keeping my window open."

"You shall have every window in the place sealed if you like."

"I shall be all right tomorrow. I could have got up today, only I felt lazy."

"Then you can very easily make the move. And then if you don't feel well at any time you can just go to bed, and I shall be there to look after you."

"If it'll please you I'll come," said Cronshaw, with his torpid not unpleasant smile.

"That'll be ripping."

They settled that Philip should fetch Cronshaw next day, and Philip snatched an hour from his busy morning to arrange the change. He found Cronshaw dressed, sitting in his hat and great-coat on the bed, with a small, shabby portmanteau, containing his clothes and books, already packed: it was on the floor by his feet, and he looked as if he were sitting in the waiting-room of a station. Philip laughed at the sight of him. They went over to Kennington in a four-wheeler, of which the windows were carefully closed, and Philip installed his guest in his own room. He had gone out early in the morning and bought for himself a second-hand bedstead, a cheap chest of drawers, and a looking-glass. Cronshaw settled down at once to correct his proofs. He was much better.

Philip found him, except for the irritability which was a symptom of his disease, an easy guest. He had a lecture at nine in the morning, so did not see Cronshaw till the night. Once or twice

Philip persuaded him to share the scrappy meal he prepared for himself in the evening, but Cronshaw was too restless to stay in, and preferred generally to get himself something to eat in one or other of the cheapest restaurants in Soho. Philip asked him to see Dr. Tyrell, but he stoutly refused; he knew a doctor would tell him to stop drinking, and this he was resolved not to do. He always felt horribly ill in the morning, but his absinthe at midday put him on his feet again, and by the time he came home, at midnight, he was able to talk with the brilliancy which had astonished Philip when first he made his acquaintance. His proofs were corrected; and the volume was to come out among the publications of the early spring, when the public might be supposed to have recovered from the avalanche of Christmas books.

LXXXIV

At the new year Philip became dresser in the surgical out-patients' department. The work was of the same character as that which he had just been engaged on, but with the greater directness which surgery has than medicine; and a larger proportion of the patients suffered from those two diseases which a supine public allows, in its prudishness, to be spread broadcast. The assistant-surgeon for whom Philip dressed was called Jacobs. He was a short, fat man, with an exuberant joviality, a bald head, and a loud voice; he had a cockney accent, and was generally described by the students as an 'awful bounder'; but his cleverness, both as a surgeon and as a teacher, caused some of them to overlook this. He had also a considerable facetiousness, which he exercised impartially on the patients and on the students. He took a great pleasure in making his dressers look foolish. Since they were ignorant, nervous, and could not answer as if he were their equal, this was not very difficult. He enjoyed his afternoons, with the home truths he permitted himself, much more than the students who had to put up with them with a smile. One day a case came up of a boy with a club-foot. His parents wanted to know whether anything could be done. Mr. Jacobs turned to Philip.

"You'd better take this case, Carey. It's a subject you ought to know something about."

Philip flushed, all the more because the surgeon spoke obviously with a humorous intention, and his brow-beaten dressers laughed obsequiously. It was in point of fact a subject which Philip, since coming to the hospital, had studied with anxious attention. He had read everything in the library which treated of talipes in its various forms. He made the boy take off his boot and stocking. He was fourteen, with a snub nose, blue eyes, and a freckled face. His father explained that they wanted something done if possible, it was such a hindrance to the kid in earning his living. Philip looked at him curiously. He was a jolly boy, not at all shy, but talkative and with a cheekiness which his father reproved. He was much interested in his foot.

"It's only for the looks of the thing, you know," he said to Philip. "I don't find it no trouble."

"Be quiet, Ernie," said his father. "There's too much gas about you."

Philip examined the foot and passed his hand slowly over the shapelessness of it. He could not understand why the boy felt none of the humiliation which always oppressed himself. He wondered why he could not take his deformity with that philosophic indifference. Presently Mr. Jacobs came up to him. The boy was sitting on the edge of a couch, the surgeon and Philip stood on each side of him; and in a semi-circle, crowding round, were students. With accustomed brilliancy Jacobs gave a graphic little discourse upon the club-foot: he spoke of its varieties and of the forms which followed upon different anatomical conditions.

"I suppose you've got talipes equinus?" he said, turning suddenly to Philip.

"Yes."

Philip felt the eyes of his fellow-students rest on him, and he cursed himself because he could not help blushing. He felt the sweat start up in the palms of his hands. The surgeon spoke with the fluency due to long practice and with the admirable perspicacity which distinguished him. He was tremendously interested in his profession. But Philip did not listen. He was only wishing that the fellow would get done quickly. Suddenly he realised that Jacobs was addressing him.

"You don't mind taking off your sock for a moment, Carey?"

Philip felt a shudder pass through him. He had an impulse to tell the surgeon to go to hell, but he had not the courage to make a scene. He feared his brutal ridicule. He forced himself to appear indifferent.

"Not a bit," he said.

He sat down and unlaced his boot. His fingers were trembling, and he thought he should never untie the knot. He remembered how they had forced him at school to show his foot, and the misery which had eaten into his soul.

"He keeps his feet nice and clean, doesn't he?" said Jacobs, in his rasping, cockney voice.

The attendant students giggled. Philip noticed that the boy whom they were examining looked down at his foot with eager curiosity. Jacobs took the foot in his hands and said:

"Yes, that's what I thought. I see you've had an operation. When you were a child, I suppose?"

He went on with his fluent explanations. The students leaned over and looked at the foot. Two or three examined it minutely when Jacobs let it go.

"When you've quite done," said Philip, with a smile, ironically.

He could have killed them all. He thought how jolly it would be to jab a chisel (he didn't know why that particular instrument came into his mind) into their necks. What beasts men were! He wished he could believe in hell so as to comfort himself with the thought of the horrible tortures which would be theirs. Mr. Jacobs turned his attention to treatment. He talked partly to the boy's father and partly to the students. Philip put on his sock and laced his boot. At last the surgeon finished. But he seemed to have an afterthought and turned to Philip.

"You know, I think it might be worth your while to have an operation. Of course I couldn't give you a normal foot, but I think I can do something. You might think about it, and when you want a holiday you can just come into the hospital for a bit."

Philip had often asked himself whether anything could be done, but his distaste for any reference to the subject had prevented him from consulting any of the surgeons at the hospital. His reading told him that whatever might have been done when he was a small boy, and then treatment of talipes was not as skilful as in the present day, there was small chance now of any great benefit. Still it would be worth while if an operation made it possible for him to wear a more ordinary boot and to limp less. He remembered how passionately he had prayed for the miracle which his uncle had assured him was possible to omnipotence. He smiled ruefully.

"I was rather a simple soul in those days," he thought.

Towards the end of February it was clear that Cronshaw was growing much worse. He was no longer able to get up. He lay in bed, insisting that the window should be closed always, and refused to see a doctor; he would take little nourishment, but demanded whiskey and cigarettes: Philip knew that he should have neither, but Cronshow's argument was unanswerable.

"I daresay they are killing me. I don't care. You've warned me, you've done all that was necessary: I ignore your warning. Give me something to drink and be damned to you."

Leonard Upjohn blew in two or three times a week, and there was something of the dead leaf in his appearance which made that word exactly descriptive of the manner of his appearance. He was a weedy-looking fellow of five-and-thirty, with long pale hair and a white face; he had the look of a man who lived too little in the open air. He wore a hat like a dissenting minister's. Philip disliked him for his patronising manner and was bored by

his fluent conversation. Leonard Upjohn liked to hear himself talk. He was not sensitive to the interest of his listeners, which is the first requisite of the good talker; and he never realised that he was telling people what they knew already. With measured words he told Philip what to think of Rodin, Albert Samain, and Cæsar Franck. Philip's charwoman only came in for an hour in the morning, and since Philip was obliged to be at the hospital all day Cronshaw was left much alone. Upjohn told Philip that he thought someone should remain with him, but did not offer to make it possible.

"It's dreadful to think of that great poet alone. Why, he might die without a soul at hand."

"I think he very probably will," said Philip.

"How can you be so callous!"

"Why don't you come and do your work here every day, and then you'd be near if he wanted anything?" asked Philip drily.

"I? My dear fellow, I can only work in the surroundings I'm used to, and besides I go out so much."

Upjohn was also a little put out because Philip had brought Cronshaw to his own rooms.

"I wish you had left him in Soho," he said, with a wave of his long, thin hands. "There was a touch of romance in that sordid attic. I could even bear it if it were Wapping or Shoreditch, but the respectability of Kennington! What a place for a poet to die!"

Cronshaw was often so ill-humoured that Philip could only keep his temper by remembering all the time that this irritability was a symptom of the disease. Upjohn came sometimes before Philip was in, and then Cronshaw would complain of him bitterly. Upjohn listened with complacency.

"The fact is that Carey has no sense of beauty," he smiled. "He has a middle-class mind."

He was very sarcastic to Philip, and Philip exercised a good deal of self-control in his dealings with him. But one evening he could not contain himself. He had had a hard day at the hospital and was tired out. Leonard Upjohn came to him, while he was making himself a cup of tea in the kitchen, and said that Cronshaw was complaining of Philip's insistence that he should have a doctor.

"Don't you realise that you're enjoying a very rare, a very exquisite privilege? You ought to do everything in your power, surely, to show your sense of the greatness of your trust."

"It's a rare and exquisite privilege which I can ill afford," said Philip.

Whenever there was any question of money, Leonard Upjohn assumed a slightly disdainful expression. His sensitive temperament was offended by the reference.

"There's something fine in Cronshaw's attitude, and you disturb it by your importunity. You should make allowances for the delicate imaginings which you cannot feel."

Philip's face darkened.

"Let us go in to Cronshaw," he said frigidly.

The poet was lying on his back, reading a book, with a pipe in his mouth. The air was musty; and the room, notwithstanding Philip's tidying up, had the bedraggled look which seemed to accompany Cronshaw wherever he went. He took off his spectacles as they came in. Philip was in a towering rage.

"Upjohn tells me you've been complaining to him because I've urged you to have a doctor," he said. "I want you to have a doctor, because you may die any day, and if you hadn't been seen by anyone I shouldn't be able to get a certificate. There'd have to be an inquest and I should be blamed for not calling a doctor in."

"I hadn't thought of that. I thought you wanted me to see a doctor for my sake and not for your own. I'll see a doctor whenever you like."

Philip did not answer, but gave an almost imperceptible shrug of the shoulders. Cronshaw, watching him, gave a little chuckle.

"Don't look so angry, my dear. I know very well you want to do everything you can for me. Let's see your doctor, perhaps he can do something for me, and at any rate it'll comfort you." He turned his eyes to Upjohn. "You're a damned fool, Leonard. Why d'you want to worry the boy? He has quite enough to do to put up with me. You'll do nothing more for me than write a pretty article about me after my death. I know you."

Next day Philip went to Dr. Tyrell. He felt that he was the sort of man to be interested by the story, and as soon as Tyrell was free of his day's work he accompanied Philip to Kennington. He could only agree with what Philip had told him. The case was hopeless.

"I'll take him into the hospital if you like," he said. "He can have a small ward."

"Nothing would induce him to come."

"You know, he may die any minute, or else he may get another attack of pneumonia."

Philip nodded. Dr. Tyrell made one or two suggestions, and promised to come again whenever Philip wanted him to. He left

his address. When Philip went back to Cronshaw he found him quietly reading. He did not trouble to enquire what the doctor had said.

"Are you satisfied now, dear boy?" he asked.

"I suppose nothing will induce you to do any of the things Tyrell advised?"

"Nothing," smiled Cronshaw.

LXXXV

About a fortnight after this Philip, going home one evening after his day's work at the hospital, knocked at the door of Cronshaw's room. He got no answer and walked in. Cronshaw was lying huddled up on one side, and Philip went up to the bed. He did not know whether Cronshaw was asleep or merely lay there in one of his uncontrollable fits of irritability. He was surprised to see that his mouth was open. He touched his shoulder. Philip gave a cry of dismay. He slipped his hand under Cronshaw's shirt and felt his heart; he did not know what to do; helplessly, because he had heard of this being done, he held a looking-glass in front of his mouth. It startled him to be alone with Cronshaw. He had his hat and coat still on, and he ran down the stairs into the street; he hailed a cab and drove to Harley Street. Dr. Tyrell was in.

"I say, would you mind coming at once? I think Cronshaw's dead."

"If he is it's not much good my coming, is it?"

"I should be awfully grateful if you would. I've got a cab at the door. It'll only take half an hour."

Tyrell put on his hat. In the cab he asked him one or two questions.

"He seemed no worse than usual when I left this morning," said Philip. "It gave me an awful shock when I went in just now. And the thought of his dying all alone. . . . D'you think he knew he was going to die?"

Philip remembered what Cronshaw had said. He wondered whether at that last moment he had been seized with the terror of death. Philip imagined himself in such a plight, knowing it was inevitable and with no one, not a soul, to give an encouraging word when the fear seized him.

"You're rather upset," said Dr. Tyrell.

He looked at him with his bright blue eyes. They were not unsympathetic. When he saw Cronshaw, he said:

"He must have been dead for some hours. I should think he died in his sleep. They do sometimes."

The body looked shrunk and ignoble. It was not like anything human. Dr. Tyrell looked at it dispassionately. With a mechanical gesture he took out his watch.

"Well, I must be getting along. I'll send the certificate round. I suppose you'll communicate with the relatives."

"I don't think there are any," said Philip.

"How about the funeral?"

"Oh, I'll see to that."

Dr. Tyrell gave Philip a glance. He wondered whether he ought to offer a couple of sovereigns towards it. He knew nothing of Philip's circumstances; perhaps he could well afford the expense; Philip might think it impertinent if he made any suggestion.

"Well, let me know if there's anything I can do," he said.

Philip and he went out together, parting on the doorstep, and Philip went to a telegraph office in order to send a message to Leonard Upjohn. Then he went to an undertaker whose shop he passed every day on his way to the hospital. His attention had been drawn to it often by the three words in silver lettering on a black cloth, which, with two model coffins, adorned the window: Economy, Celerity, Propriety. They had always diverted him. The undertaker was a little fat Jew with curly black hair, long and greasy, in black, with a large diamond ring on a podgy finger. He received Philip with a peculiar manner formed by the mingling of his natural blatancy with the subdued air proper to his calling. He quickly saw that Philip was very helpless and promised to send round a woman at once to perform the needful offices. His suggestions for the funeral were very magnificent; and Philip felt ashamed of himself when the undertaker seemed to think his objections mean. It was horrible to haggle on such a matter, and finally Philip consented to an expensiveness which he could ill afford.

"I quite understand, sir," said the undertaker, "you don't want any show and that—I'm not a believer in ostentation myself, mind you—but you want it done gentlemanly-like. You leave it to me, I'll do it as cheap as it can be done, 'aving regard to what's right and proper. I can't say more than that, can I?"

Philip went home to eat his supper, and while he ate the woman came along to lay out the corpse. Presently a telegram arrived from Leonard Upjohn.

"Shocked and grieved beyond measure. Regret cannot come tonight. Dining out. With you early tomorrow. Deepest sympathy. Upjohn."

In a little while the woman knocked at the door of the sitting-room.

"I've done now, sir. Will you come and look at 'im and see it's all right?"

Philip followed her. Cronshaw was lying on his back, with his eyes closed and his hands folded piously across his chest.

"You ought by rights to 'ave a few flowers, sir."

"I'll get some tomorrow."

She gave the body a glance of satisfaction. She had performed her job, and now she rolled down her sleeves, took off her apron, and put on her bonnet. Philip asked her how much he owed her.

"Well, sir, some give me two and sixpence and some give me five shillings."

Philip was ashamed to give her less than the larger sum. She thanked him with just so much effusiveness as was seemly in presence of the grief he might be supposed to feel, and left him. Philip went back into his sitting-room, cleared away the remains of his supper, and sat down to read Walsham's *Surgery*. He found it difficult. He felt singularly nervous. When there was a sound on the stairs he jumped, and his heart beat violently. That thing in the adjoining room, which had been a man and now was nothing, frightened him. The silence seemed alive, as if some mysterious movement were taking place within it; the presence of death weighed upon these rooms, unearthly and terrifying: Philip felt a sudden horror for what had once been his friend. He tried to force himself to read, but presently pushed away his book in despair. What troubled him was the absolute futility of the life which had just ended. It did not matter if Cronshaw was alive or dead. It would have been just as well if he had never lived. Philip thought of Cronshaw young; and it needed an effort of imagination to picture him slender, with a springing step, and with hair on his head, buoyant and hopeful. Philip's rule of life, to follow one's instincts with due regard to the policeman round the corner, had not acted very well there: it was because Cronshaw had done this that he had made such a lamentable failure of existence. It seemed that the instincts could not be trusted. Philip was puzzled, and he asked himself what rule of life was there, if that one was useless, and why people acted in one way rather than in another. They acted according to their emotions, but their emotions might be good or bad; it seemed just a chance whether they led to triumph or disaster. Life seemed an inextricable confusion. Men hurried hither and thither, urged by forces they knew not; and the purpose of it all escaped them; they seemed to hurry just for hurrying's sake.

Next morning Leonard Upjohn appeared with a small wreath of

laurel. He was pleased with his idea of crowning the dead poet with this; and attempted, notwithstanding Philip's disapproving silence, to fix it on the bald head; but the wreath fitted grotesquely. It looked like the brim of a hat worn by a low comedian in a music-hall.

"I'll put it over his heart instead," said Upjohn.

"You've put it on his stomach," remarked Philip.

Upjohn give a thin smile.

"Only a poet knows where lies a poet's heart," he answered.

They went back into the sitting-room, and Philip told him what arrangements he had made for the funeral.

"I hope you've spared no expense. I should like the hearse to be followed by a long string of empty coaches, and I should like the horses to wear tall nodding plumes, and there should be a vast number of mutes with long streamers on their hats. I like the thought of all those empty coaches."

"As the cost of the funeral will apparently fall on me and I'm not over flush just now, I've tried to make it as moderate as possible."

"But, my dear fellow, in that case, why didn't you get him a pauper's funeral? There would have been something poetic in that. You have an unerring instinct for mediocrity."

Philip flushed a little, but did not answer; and next day he and Upjohn followed the hearse in the one carriage which Philip had ordered. Lawson, unable to come, had sent a wreath; and Philip, so that the coffin should not seem too neglected, had bought a couple. On the way back the coachman whipped up his horses. Philip was dog-tired and presently went to sleep. He was awakened by Upjohn's voice.

"It's rather lucky the poems haven't come out yet. I think we'd better hold them back a bit and I'll write a preface. I began thinking of it during the drive to the cemetery. I believe I can do something rather good. Anyhow I'll start with an article in *The Saturday*."

Philip did not reply, and there was silence between them. At last Upjohn said:

"I daresay I'd be wiser not to whittle away my copy. I think I'll do an article for one of the reviews, and then I can just print it afterwards as a preface."

Philip kept his eye on the monthlies, and a few weeks later it appeared. The article made something of a stir, and extracts from it were printed in many of the papers. It was a very good article, vaguely biographical, for no one knew much of Cronshaw's early

life, but delicate, tender, and picturesque. Leonard Upjohn in his intricate style drew graceful little pictures of Cronshaw in the Latin Quarter, talking, writing poetry: Cronshaw became a picturesque figure, an English Verlaine; and Leonard Upjohn's coloured phrases took on a tremulous dignity, a more pathetic grandiloquence, as he described the sordid end, the shabby little room in Soho; and, with a reticence which was wholly charming and suggested a much greater generosity than modesty allowed him to state, the efforts he made to transport the poet to some cottage embowered with honeysuckle amid a flowering orchard. And the lack of sympathy, well-meaning but so tactless, which had taken the poet instead to the vulgar respectability of Kennington! Leonard Upjohn described Kennington with that restrained humour which a strict adherence to the vocabulary of Sir Thomas Browne necessitated. With delicate sarcasm he narrated the last weeks, the patience with which Cronshaw bore the well-meaning clumsiness of the young student who had appointed himself his nurse, and the pitifulness of that divine vagabond in those hopelessly middle-class surroundings. Beauty from ashes, he quoted from Isaiah. It was a triumph of irony for that outcast poet to die amid the trappings of vulgar respectability; it reminded Leonard Upjohn of Christ among the Pharisees, and the analogy gave him opportunity for an exquisite passage. And then he told how a friend—his good taste did not suffer him more than to hint subtly who the friend was with such gracious fancies—had laid a laurel wreath on the dead poet's heart; and the beautiful dead hands had seemed to rest with a voluptuous passion upon Apollo's leaves, fragrant with the fragrance of art, and more green than jade brought by swart mariners from the manifold, inexplicable China. And, an admirable contrast, the article ended with a description of the middle-class, ordinary, prosaic funeral of him who should have been buried like a prince or like a pauper. It was the crowning buffet, the final victory of Philistia over art, beauty, and immaterial things.

Leonard Upjohn had never written anything better. It was a miracle of charm, grace, and pity. He printed all Cronshaw's best poems in the course of the article, so that when the volume appeared much of its point was gone; but he advanced his own position a good deal. He was thenceforth a critic to be reckoned with. He had seemed before a little aloof; but there was a warm humanity about this article which was infinitely attractive.

LXXXVI

In the spring Philip, having finished his dressing in the out-patients' department, became an in-patients' clerk. This appointment lasted six months. The clerk spent every morning in the wards, first in the men's, then in the women's, with the house-physician; he wrote up cases, made tests, and passed the time of day with the nurses. On two afternoons a week the physician in charge went round with a little knot of students, examined the cases, and dispensed information. The work had not the excitement, the constant change, the intimate contact with reality, of the work in the out-patients' department; but Philip picked up a good deal of knowledge. He got on very well with the patients, and he was a little flattered at the pleasure they showed in his attendance on them. He was not conscious of any deep sympathy in their sufferings, but he liked them; and because he put on no airs he was more popular with them than others of the clerks. He was pleasant, encouraging, and friendly. Like everyone connected with hospitals he found that male patients were more easy to get on with than female. The women were often querulous and ill-tempered. They complained bitterly of the hard-worked nurses, who did not show them the attention they thought their right; and they were troublesome, ungrateful, and rude.

Presently Philip was fortunate enough to make a friend. One morning the house-physician gave him a new case, a man; and, seating himself at the bedside, Philip proceeded to write down particulars on the 'letter.' He noticed on looking at this that the patient was described as a journalist: his name was Thorpe Athelny, an unusual one for a hospital patient, and his age was forty-eight. He was suffering from a sharp attack of jaundice, and had been taken into the ward on account of obscure symptoms which it seemed necessary to watch. He answered the various questions which it was Philip's duty to ask him in a pleasant, educated voice. Since he was lying in bed it was difficult to tell if he was short or tall, but his small head and small hands suggested that he was a man of less than average height. Philip had the habit of looking at people's hands, and Athelny's astonished him: they were very small, with long, tapering fingers and beautiful, rosy finger-nails; they were very smooth and except for the jaundice would have been of

a surprising whiteness. The patient kept them outside the bedclothes, one of them slightly spread out, the second and third fingers together, and, while he spoke to Philip, seemed to contemplate them with satisfaction. With a twinkle in his eyes Philip glanced at the man's face. Notwithstanding the yellowness it was distinguished; he had blue eyes, a nose of an imposing boldness, hooked, aggressive, but not clumsy, and a small beard, pointed and gray: he was rather bald, but his hair had evidently been quite fine, curling prettily, and he still wore it long.

"I see you're a journalist," said Philip. "What papers d'you write for?"

"I write for all the papers. You cannot open a paper without seeing some of my writing."

There was one by the side of the bed and reaching for it he pointed out an advertisement. In large letters was the name of a firm well-known to Philip, Lynn and Sedley, Regent Street, London; and below, in type smaller but still of some magnitude, was the dogmatic statement: Procrastination is the Thief of Time. Then a question, startling because of its reasonableness: Why not order today? There was a repetition, in large letters, like the hammering of conscience on a murderer's heart: Why not? Then, boldly: Thousands of pairs of gloves from the leading markets of the world at astounding prices. Thousands of pairs of stockings from the most reliable manufacturers of the universe at sensational reductions. Finally the question recurred, but flung now like a challenging gauntlet in the lists: Why not order today?

"I'm the press representative of Lynn and Sedley." He gave a little wave of his beautiful hand. "To what base uses . . ."

Philip went on asking the regulation questions, some a mere matter of routine, others artfully devised to lead the patient to discover things which he might be expected to desire to conceal.

"Have you ever lived abroad?" asked Philip.

"I was in Spain for eleven years."

"What were you doing there?"

"I was secretary of the English water company at Toledo."

Philip remembered that Clutton had spent some months in Toledo, and the journalist's answer made him look at him with more interest; but he felt it would be improper to show this: it was necessary to preserve the distance between the hospital patient and the staff. When he had finished his examination he went on to other beds.

Thorpe Athelny's illness was not grave, and, though remaining very yellow, he soon felt much better: he stayed in bed only be-

cause the physician thought he should be kept under observation till certain reactions became normal. One day, on entering the ward, Philip noticed that Athelny, pencil in hand, was reading a book. He put it down when Philip came to his bed.

"May I see what you're reading?" asked Philip, who could never pass a book without looking at it.

Philip took it up and saw that it was a volume of Spanish verse, the poems of San Juan de la Cruz, and as he opened it a sheet of paper fell out. Philip picked it up and noticed that verse was written upon it.

"You're not going to tell me you've been occupying your leisure in writing poetry? That's a most improper proceeding in a hospital patient."

"I was trying to do some translations. D'you know Spanish?"

"No."

"Well, you know all about San Juan de la Cruz, don't you?"

"I don't indeed."

"He was one of the Spanish mystics. He's one of the best poets they've ever had. I thought it would be worth while translating him into English."

"May I look at your translation?"

"It's very rough," said Athelny, but he gave it to Philip with an alacrity which suggested that he was eager for him to read it.

It was written in pencil, in a fine but very peculiar handwriting, which was hard to read: it was just like black letter.

"Doesn't it take you an awful time to write like that? It's wonderful."

"I don't know why handwriting shouldn't be beautiful."

Philip read the first verse:

In an obscure night
With anxious love inflamed
O happy lot!
Forth unobserved I went,
My house being now at rest . . .

Philip looked curiously at Thorpe Athelny. He did not know whether he felt a little shy with him or was attracted by him. He was conscious that his manner had been slightly patronising, and he flushed as it struck him that Athelny might have thought him ridiculous.

"What an unusual name you've got," he remarked, for something to say.

"It's a very old Yorkshire name. Once it took the head of my family a day's hard riding to make the circuit of his estates, but the mighty are fallen. Fast women and slow horses."

He was short-sighted and when he spoke looked at you with a peculiar intensity. He took up his volume of poetry.

"You should read Spanish," he said. "It is a noble tongue. It has not the mellifluousness of Italian, Italian is the language of tenors and organ-grinders, but it has grandeur: it does not ripple like a brook in a garden, but it surges tumultuous like a mighty river in flood."

His grandiloquence amused Philip, but he was sensitive to rhetoric; and he listened with pleasure while Athelny, with picturesque expressions and the fire of a real enthusiasm, described to him the rich delight of reading *Don Quixote* in the original and the music, romantic, limpid, passionate, of the enchanting Calderon.

"I must get on with my work," said Philip presently.

"Oh, forgive me, I forgot. I will tell my wife to bring me a photograph of Toledo, and I will show it you. Come and talk to me when you have the chance. You don't know what a pleasure it gives me."

During the next few days, in moments snatched whenever there was opportunity, Philip's acquaintance with the journalist increased. Thorpe Athelny was a good talker. He did not say brilliant things, but he talked inspiringly, with an eager vividness which fired the imagination; Philip, living so much in a world of make-believe, found his fancy teeming with new pictures. Athelny had very good manners. He knew much more than Philip, both of the world and of books; he was a much older man; and the readiness of his conversation gave him a certain superiority; but he was in the hospital a recipient of charity, subject to strict rules; and he held himself between the two positions with ease and humour. Once Philip asked him why he had come to the hospital.

"Oh, my principle is to profit by all the benefits that society provides. I take advantage of the age I live in. When I'm ill I get myself patched up in a hospital, and I have no false shame, and I send my children to be educated at the board-school."

"Do you really?" said Philip.

"And a capital education they get too, much better than I got at Winchester. How else do you think I could educate them at all? I've got nine. You must come and see them all when I get home again. Will you?"

"I'd like to very much," said Philip.

LXXXVII

Ten days later Thorpe Athelny was well enough to leave the hospital. He gave Philip his address, and Philip promised to dine with him at one o'clock on the following Sunday. Athelny had told him that he lived in a house built by Inigo Jones; he had raved, as he raved over everything, over the balustrade of old oak; and when he came down to open the door for Philip he made him at once admire the elegant carving of the lintel. It was a shabby house, badly needing a coat of paint, but with the dignity of its period, in a little street between Chancery Lane and Holborn, which had once been fashionable but was now little better than a slum: there was a plan to pull it down in order to put up handsome offices; meanwhile the rents were small, and Athelny was able to get the two upper floors at a price which suited his income. Philip had not seen him up before and was surprised at his small size; he was not more than five feet and five inches high. He was dressed fantastically in blue linen trousers of the sort worn by working men in France, and a very old brown velvet coat; he wore a bright red sash round his waist, a low collar, and for tie a flowing bow of the kind used by the comic Frenchman in the pages of *Punch*. He greeted Philip with enthusiasm. He began talking at once of the house and passed his hand lovingly over the balusters.

"Look at it, feel it, it's like silk. What a miracle of grace! And in five years the house-breaker will sell it for firewood."

He insisted on taking Philip into a room on the first floor, where a man in shirt sleeves, a blousy woman, and three children were having their Sunday dinner.

"I've just brought this gentleman in to show him your ceiling. Did you ever see anything so wonderful? How are you, Mrs. Hodgson? This is Mr. Carey, who looked after me when I was in the hospital."

"Come in, sir," said the man. "Any friend of Mr. Athelny's is welcome. Mr. Athelny shows the ceiling to all his friends. And it don't matter what we're doing, if we're in bed or if I'm 'aving a wash, in 'e comes."

Philip could see that they looked upon Athelny as a little queer; but they liked him none the less and they listened open-

mouthed while he discoursed with his impetuous fluency on the beauty of the seventeenth-century ceiling.

"What a crime to pull this down, eh, Hodgson? You're an influential citizen, why don't you write to the papers and protest?"

The man in shirt sleeves gave a laugh and said to Philip:

"Mr. Athelny will 'ave his little joke. They do say these 'ouses are that insanitory, it's not safe to live in them."

"Sanitation be damned, give me art," cried Athelny. "I've got nine children and they thrive on bad drains. No, no, I'm not going to take any risks. None of your new-fangled notions for me! When I move from here I'm going to make sure the drains are bad before I take anything."

There was a knock at the door, and a little fair-haired girl opened it.

"Daddy, mummy says, do stop talking and come and eat your dinner."

"This is my third daughter," said Athelny, pointing to her with a dramatic forefinger. "She is called Maria del Pilar, but she answers more willingly to the name of Jane. Jane, your nose wants blowing."

"I haven't got a hanky, daddy."

"Tut, tut, child," he answered, as he produced a vast, brilliant bandanna, "what do you suppose the Almighty gave you fingers for?"

They went upstairs, and Philip was taken into a room with walls panelled in dark oak. In the middle was a narrow table of teak on trestle legs, with two supporting bars of iron, of the kind called in Spain *mesa de hieraje*. They were to dine there, for two places were laid, and there were two large arm-chairs, with broad flat arms of oak and leathern backs, and leathern seats. They were severe, elegant, and uncomfortable. The only other piece of furniture was a *bargueño,* elaborately ornamented with gilt iron-work, on a stand of ecclesiastical design roughly but very finely carved. There stood on this two or three lustre plates, much broken but rich in colour; and on the walls were old masters of the Spanish school in beautiful though dilapidated frames: though gruesome in subject, ruined by age and bad treatment, and second rate in their conception, they had a glow of passion. There was nothing in the room of any value, but the effect was lovely. It was magnificent and yet austere. Philip felt that it offered the very spirit of old Spain. Athelny was in the middle of showing him the inside of the *bargueño,* with its beautiful ornamentation and secret drawers, when a tall girl, with two plaits of bright brown hair hanging down her back, came in.

"Mother says dinner's ready and waiting and I'm to bring it in as soon as you sit down."

"Come and shake hands with Mr. Carey, Sally." He turned to Philip. "Isn't she enormous? She's my eldest. How old are you, Sally?"

"Fifteen, father, come next June."

"I christened her Maria del Sol, because she was my first child and I dedicated her to the glorious sun of Castile; but her mother calls her Sally and her brother Pudding-Face."

The girl smiled shyly, she had even, white teeth, and blushed. She was well set-up, tall for her age, with pleasant gray eyes and a broad forehead. She had red cheeks.

"Go and tell your mother to come in and shake hands with Mr. Carey before he sits down."

"Mother says she'll come in after dinner. She hasn't washed herself yet."

"Then we'll go in and see her ourselves. He mustn't eat the Yorkshire pudding till he's shaken the hand that made it."

Philip followed his host into the kitchen. It was small and much overcrowded. There had been a lot of noise, but it stopped as soon as the stranger entered. There was a large table in the middle and round it, eager for dinner, were seated Athelny's children. A woman was standing at the oven, taking out baked potatoes one by one.

"Here's Mr. Carey, Betty," said Athelny.

"Fancy bringing him in here. What will he think?"

She wore a dirty apron, and the sleeves of her cotton dress were turned up above her elbows; she had curling pins in her hair. Mrs. Athelny was a large woman, a good three inches taller than her husband, fair, with blue eyes and a kindly expression; she had been a handsome creature, but advancing years and the bearing of many children had made her fat and blousy; her blue eyes had become pale, her skin was coarse and red, the colour had gone out of her hair. She straightened herself, wiped her hand on her apron, and held it out.

"You're welcome, sir," she said, in a slow voice, with an accent that seemed oddly familiar to Philip. "Athelny said you was very kind to him in the 'orspital."

"Now you must be introduced to the live stock," said Athelny. "That is Thorpe," he pointed to a chubby boy with curly hair, "he is my eldest son, heir to the title, estates, and responsibilities of the family. There is Athelstan, Harold, Edward." He pointed with his forefinger to three smaller boys, all rosy, healthy, and

smiling, though when they felt Philip's smiling eyes upon them they looked shyly down at their plates. "Now the girls in order: Maria del Sol . . ."

"Pudding-Face," said one of the small boys.

"Your sense of humour is rudimentary, my son. Maria de los Mercedes, Maria del Pilar, Maria de la Concepcion, Maria del Rosario."

"I call them Sally, Molly, Connie, Rosie, and Jane," said Mrs. Athelny. "Now, Athelny, you go into your own room and I'll send you your dinner. I'll let the children come in afterwards for a bit when I've washed them."

"My dear, if I'd had the naming of you I should have called you Maria of the Soapsuds. You're always torturing these wretched brats with soap."

"You go first, Mr. Carey, or I shall never get him to sit down and eat his dinner."

Athelny and Philip installed themselves in the great monkish chairs, and Sally brought them in two plates of beef, Yorkshire pudding, baked potatoes, and cabbage. Athelny took sixpence out of his pocket and sent her for a jug of beer.

"I hope you didn't have the table laid here on my account," said Philip. "I should have been quite happy to eat with the children."

"Oh no, I always have my meals by myself. I like these antique customs. I don't think that women ought to sit down at table with men. It ruins conversation and I'm sure it's very bad for them. It puts ideas in their heads, and women are never at ease with themselves when they have ideas."

Both host and guest ate with a hearty appetite.

"Did you ever taste such Yorkshire pudding? No one can make it like my wife. That's the advantage of not marrying a lady. You noticed she wasn't a lady, didn't you?"

It was an awkward question, and Philip did not know how to answer it.

"I never thought about it," he said lamely.

Athelny laughed. He had a peculiarly joyous laugh.

"No, she's not a lady, nor anything like it. Her father was a farmer, and she's never bothered about aitches in her life. We've had twelve children and nine of them are alive. I tell her it's about time she stopped, but she's an obstinate woman, she's got into the habit of it now, and I don't believe she'll be satisfied till she's had twenty."

At that moment Sally came in with the beer, and, having poured

out a glass for Philip, went to the other side of the table to pour some out for her father. He put his hand round her waist.

"Did you ever see such a handsome, strapping girl? Only fifteen and she might be twenty. Look at her cheeks. She's never had a day's illness in her life. It'll be a lucky man who marries her, won't it, Sally?"

Sally listened to all this with a slight, slow smile, not much embarrassed, for she was accustomed to her father's outbursts, but with an easy modesty which was very attractive.

"Don't let your dinner get cold, father," she said, drawing herself away from his arm. "You'll call when you're ready for your pudding, won't you?"

They were left alone, and Athelny lifted the pewter tankard to his lips. He drank long and deep.

"My word, is there anything better than English beer?" he said. "Let us thank God for simple pleasures, roast beef and rice pudding, a good appetite and beer. I was married to a lady once. My God! Don't marry a lady, my boy."

Philip laughed. He was exhilarated by the scene, the funny little man in his odd clothes, the panelled room and the Spanish furniture, the English fare: the whole thing had an exquisite incongruity.

"You laugh, my boy, you can't imagine marrying beneath you. You want a wife who's an intellectual equal. Your head is crammed full of ideas of comradeship. Stuff and nonsense, my boy! A man doesn't want to talk politics to his wife, and what do you think I care for Betty's views upon the Differential Calculus? A man wants a wife who can cook his dinner and look after his children. I've tried both and I know. Let's have the pudding in."

He clapped his hands and presently Sally came. When she took away the plates, Philip wanted to get up and help her, but Athelny stopped him.

"Let her alone, my boy. She doesn't want you to fuss about, do you, Sally? And she won't think it rude of you to sit still while she waits upon you. She don't care a damn for chivalry, do you, Sally?"

"No, father," answered Sally demurely.

"Do you know what I'm talking about, Sally?"

"No, father. But you know mother doesn't like you to swear."

Athelny laughed boisterously. Sally brought them plates of rice pudding, rich, creamy, and luscious. Athelny attacked his with gusto.

"One of the rules of this house is that Sunday dinner should

never alter. It is a ritual. Roast beef and rice pudding for fifty Sundays in the year. On Easter Sunday lamb and green peas, and at Michaelmas roast goose and apple sauce. Thus we preserve the traditions of our people. When Sally marries she will forget many of the wise things I have taught her, but she will never forget that if you want to be good and happy you must eat on Sundays roast beef and rice pudding."

"You'll call when you're ready for cheese," said Sally impassively.

"D'you know the legend of the halcyon?" said Athelny: Philip was growing used to his rapid leaping from one subject to another. "When the kingfisher, flying over the sea, is exhausted, his mate places herself beneath him and bears him along upon her stronger wings. That is what a man wants in a wife, the halcyon. I lived with my first wife for three years. She was a lady, she had fifteen hundred a year, and we used to give nice little dinner parties in our little red brick house in Kensington. She was a charming woman; they all said so, the barristers and their wives who dined with us, and the literary stockbrokers, and the budding politicians; oh, she was a charming woman. She made me go to church in a silk hat and a frock coat, she took me to classical concerts, and she was very fond of lectures on Sunday afternoon; and she sat down to breakfast every morning at eight-thirty, and if I was late breakfast was cold; and she read the right books, admired the right pictures, and adored the right music. My God, how that woman bored me! She is charming still, and she lives in the little red brick house in Kensington, with Morris papers and Whistler's etchings on the walls, and gives the same nice little dinner parties, with veal creams and ices from Gunter's, as she did twenty years ago."

Philip did not ask by what means the ill-matched couple had separated, but Athelny told him.

"Betty's not my wife, you know; my wife wouldn't divorce me. The children are bastards, every jack one of them, and are they any the worse for that? Betty was one of the maids in the little red brick house in Kensington. Four or five years ago I was on my uppers, and I had seven children, and I went to my wife and asked her to help me. She said she'd make me an allowance if I'd give Betty up and go abroad. Can you see me giving Betty up? We starved for a while instead. My wife said I loved the gutter. I've degenerated; I've come down in the world; I earn three pounds a week as press agent to a linen-draper, and every day I thank God that I'm not in the little red brick house in Kensington."

Sally brought in Cheddar cheese, and Athelny went on with his fluent conversation.

"It's the greatest mistake in the world to think that one needs money to bring up a family. You need money to make them gentlemen and ladies, but I don't want my children to be ladies and gentlemen. Sally's going to earn her living in another year. She's to be apprenticed to a dressmaker, aren't you, Sally? And the boys are going to serve their country. I want them all to go into the Navy; it's a jolly life and a healthy life, good food, good pay, and a pension to end their days on."

Philip lit his pipe. Athelny smoked cigarettes of Havana tobacco, which he rolled himself. Sally cleared away. Philip was reserved, and it embarrassed him to be the recipient of so many confidences. Athelny, with his powerful voice in the diminutive body, with his bombast, with his foreign look, with his emphasis, was an astonishing creature. He reminded Philip a good deal of Cronshaw. He appeared to have the same independence of thought, the same bohemianism, but he had an infinitely more vivacious temperament; his mind was coarser, and he had not that interest in the abstract which made Cronshaw's conversation so captivating. Athelny was very proud of the county family to which he belonged; he showed Philip photographs of an Elizabethan mansion, and told him:

"The Athelnys have lived there for seven centuries, my boy. Ah, if you saw the chimney-pieces and the ceilings!"

There was a cupboard in the wainscoting and from this he took a family tree. He showed it to Philip with childlike satisfaction. It was indeed imposing.

"You see how the family names recur, Thorpe, Athelstan, Harold, Edward; I've used the family names for my sons. And the girls, you see, I've given Spanish names to."

An uneasy feeling came to Philip that possibly the whole story was an elaborate imposture, not told with any base motive, but merely from a wish to impress, startle, and amaze. Athelny had told him that he was at Winchester; but Philip, sensitive to differences of manner, did not feel that his host had the characteristics of a man educated at a great public school. While he pointed out the great alliances which his ancestors had formed, Philip amused himself by wondering whether Athelny was not the son of some tradesman in Winchester, auctioneer or coal-merchant, and whether a similarity of surname was not his only connection with the ancient family whose tree he was displaying.

LXXXVIII

THERE was a knock at the door and a troop of children came in. They were clean and tidy now; their faces shone with soap, and their hair was plastered down; they were going to Sunday school under Sally's charge. Athelny joked with them in his dramatic, exuberant fashion, and you could see that he was devoted to them all. His pride in their good health and their good looks was touching. Philip felt that they were a little shy in his presence, and when their father sent them off they fled from the room in evident relief. In a few minutes Mrs. Athelny appeared. She had taken her hair out of the curling pins and now wore an elaborate fringe. She had on a plain black dress, a hat with cheap flowers, and was forcing her hands, red and coarse from much work, into black kid gloves.

"I'm going to church, Athelny," she said. "There's nothing you'll be wanting, is there?"

"Only your prayers, my Betty."

"They won't do you much good, you're too far gone for that," she smiled. Then, turning to Philip, she drawled: "I can't get him to go to church. He's no better than an atheist."

"Doesn't she look like Rubens' second wife?" cried Athelny. "Wouldn't she look splendid in a seventeenth-century costume? That's the sort of wife to marry, my boy. Look at her."

"I believe you'd talk the hind leg off a donkey, Athelny," she answered calmly.

She succeeded in buttoning her gloves, but before she went she turned to Philip with a kindly, slightly embarrassed smile.

"You'll stay to tea, won't you? Athelny likes someone to talk to, and it's not often he gets anybody who's clever enough."

"Of course he'll stay to tea," said Athelny. Then when his wife had gone: "I make a point of the children going to Sunday school, and I like Betty to go to church. I think women ought to be religious. I don't believe myself, but I like women and children to."

Philip, strait-laced in matters of truth, was a little shocked by this airy attitude.

"But how can you look on while your children are being taught things which you don't think are true?"

"If they're beautiful I don't much mind if they're not true.

It's asking a great deal that things should appeal to your reason as well as to your sense of the æsthetic. I wanted Betty to become a Roman Catholic, I should have liked to see her converted in a crown of paper flowers, but she's hopelessly Protestant. Besides, religion is a matter of temperament; you will believe anything if you have the religious turn of mind, and if you haven't it doesn't matter what beliefs were instilled into you, you will grow out of them. Perhaps religion is the best school of morality. It is like one of those drugs you gentlemen use in medicine which carries another in solution: it is of no efficacy in itself, but enables the other to be absorbed. You take your morality because it is combined with religion; you lose the religion and the morality stays behind. A man is more likely to be a good man if he has learned goodness through the love of God than through a perusal of Herbert Spencer."

This was contrary to all Philip's ideas. He still looked upon Christianity as a degrading bondage that must be cast away at any cost; it was connected subconsciously in his mind with the dreary services in the cathedral at Tercanbury, and the long hours of boredom in the cold church at Blackstable; and the morality of which Athelny spoke was to him no more than a part of the religion which a halting intelligence preserved, when it had laid aside the beliefs which alone made it reasonable. But while he was meditating a reply Athelny, more interested in hearing himself speak than in discussion, broken into a tirade upon Roman Catholicism. For him it was an essential part of Spain; and Spain meant much to him, because he had escaped to it from the conventionality which during his married life he had found so irksome. With large gestures and in the emphatic tone which made what he said so striking, Athelny described to Philip the Spanish cathedrals with their vast dark spaces, the massive gold of the altar-pieces, and the sumptuous iron-work, gilt and faded, the air laden with incense, the silence: Philip almost saw the Canons in their short surplices of lawn, the acolytes in red, passing from the sacristy to the choir; he almost heard the monotonous chanting of vespers. The names which Athelny mentioned, Avila, Tarragona, Saragossa, Segovia, Cordoba, were like trumpets in his heart. He seemed to see the great gray piles of granite set in old Spanish towns amid a landscape tawny, wild, and windswept.

"I've always thought I should love to go to Seville," he said casually, when Athelny, with one hand dramatically uplifted, paused for a moment.

"Seville!" cried Athelny. "No, no, don't go there. Seville: it brings to the mind girls dancing with castanets, singing in gardens by the Guadalquivir, bull-fights, orange-blossom, mantillas, *mantones de Manila.* It is the Spain of comic opera and Montmartre. Its facile charm can offer permanent entertainment only to an intelligence which is superficial. Théophile Gautier got out of Seville all that it has to offer. We who come after him can only repeat his sensations. He put large fat hands on the obvious and there is nothing but the obvious there; and it is all finger-marked and frayed. Murillo is its painter."

Athelny got up from his chair, walked over to the Spanish cabinet, let down the front with its great gilt hinges and gorgeous lock, and displayed a series of little drawers. He took out a bundle of photographs.

"Do you know El Greco?" he asked.

"Oh, I remember one of the men in Paris was awfully impressed by him."

"El Greco was the painter of Toledo. Betty couldn't find the photograph I wanted to show you. It's a picture that El Greco painted of the city he loved, and it's truer than any photograph. Come and sit at the table."

Philip dragged his chair forward, and Athelny set the photograph before him. He looked at it curiously, for a long time, in silence. He stretched out his hand for other photographs, and Athelny passed them to him. He had never before seen the work of that enigmatic master; and at the first glance he was bothered by the arbitrary drawing: the figures were extraordinarily elongated; the heads were very small; the attitudes were extravagant. This was not realism, and yet, and yet even in the photographs you had the impression of a troubling reality. Athelny was describing eagerly, with vivid phrases, but Philip only heard vaguely what he said. He was puzzled. He was curiously moved. These pictures seemed to offer some meaning to him, but he did not know what the meaning was. There were portraits of men with large, melancholy eyes which seemed to say you knew not what; there were long monks in the Franciscan habit or in the Dominican, with distraught faces, making gestures whose sense escaped you; there was an Assumption of the Virgin; there was a Crucifixion in which the painter by some magic of feeling had been able to suggest that the flesh of Christ's dead body was not human flesh only but divine; and there was an Ascension in which the Saviour seemed to surge up towards the empyrean and yet to stand upon the air as steadily as though it were solid ground: the uplifted arms of the Apostles, the sweep of

their draperies, their ecstatic gestures, gave an impression of exultation and of holy joy. The background of nearly all was the sky by night, the dark night of the soul, with wild clouds swept by strange winds of hell and lit luridly by an uneasy moon.

"I've seen that sky in Toledo over and over again," said Athelny. "I have an idea that when first El Greco came to the city it was by such a night, and it made so vehement an impression upon him that he could never get away from it."

Philip remembered how Clutton had been affected by this strange master, whose work he now saw for the first time. He thought that Clutton was the most interesting of all the people he had known in Paris. His sardonic manner, his hostile aloofness, had made it difficult to know him; but it seemed to Philip, looking back, that there had been in him a tragic force, which sought vainly to express itself in painting. He was a man of unusual character, mystical after the fashion of a time that had no leaning to mysticism, who was impatient with life because he found himself unable to say the things which the obscure impulses of his heart suggested. His intellect was not fashioned to the uses of the spirit. It was not surprising that he felt a deep sympathy with the Greek who had devised a new technique to express the yearnings of his soul. Philip looked again at the series of portraits of Spanish gentlemen, with ruffles and pointed beards, their faces pale against the sober black of their clothes and the darkness of the background. El Greco was the painter of the soul; and these gentlemen, wan and wasted, not by exhaustion but by restraint, with their tortured minds, seem to walk unaware of the beauty of the world; for their eyes look only in their hearts, and they are dazzled by the glory of the unseen. No painter has shown more pitilessly that the world is but a place of passage. The souls of the men he painted speak their strange longings through their eyes: their senses are miraculously acute, not for sounds and odours and colour, but for the very subtle sensations of the soul. The noble walks with the monkish heart within him, and his eyes see things which saints in their cells see too, and he is unastounded. His lips are not lips that smile.

Philip, silent still, returned to the photograph of Toledo, which seemed to him the most arresting picture of them all. He could not take his eyes off it. He felt strangely that he was on the threshold of some new discovery in life. He was tremulous with a sense of adventure. He thought for an instant of the love that had consumed him: love seemed very trivial beside the excitement which now leaped in his heart. The picture he looked at was a long

one, with houses crowded upon a hill; in one corner a boy was holding a large map of the town; in another was a classical figure representing the river Tagus; and in the sky was the Virgin surrounded by angels. It was a landscape alien to all Philip's notions, for he had lived in circles that worshipped exact realism; and yet here again, strangely to himself, he felt a reality greater than any achieved by the masters in whose steps humbly he had sought to walk. He heard Athelny say that the representation was so precise that when the citizens of Toledo came to look at the picture they recognised their houses. The painter had painted exactly what he saw, but he had seen with the eyes of the spirit. There was something unearthly in that city of pale gray. It was a city of the soul seen by a wan light that was neither that of night nor day. It stood on a green hill, but of a green not of this world, and it was surrounded by massive walls and bastions to be stormed by no machines or engines of man's invention, but by prayer and fasting, by contrite sighs and by mortifications of the flesh. It was a stronghold of God. Those gray houses were made of no stone known to masons, there was something terrifying in their aspect, and you did not know what men might live in them. You might walk through the streets and be unamazed to find them all deserted, and yet not empty; for you felt a presence invisible and yet manifest to every inner sense. It was a mystical city in which the imagination faltered like one who steps out of the light into darkness; the soul walked naked to and fro, knowing the unknowable, and conscious strangely of experience, intimate but inexpressible, of the absolute. And without surprise, in that blue sky, real with a reality that not the eye but the soul confesses, with its rack of light clouds driven by strange breezes, like the cries and the sighs of lost souls, you saw the Blessed Virgin with a gown of red and a cloak of blue, surrounded by winged angels. Philip felt that the inhabitants of that city would have seen the apparition without astonishment, reverent and thankful, and have gone their ways.

Athelny spoke of the mystical writers of Spain, of Teresa de Avila, San Juan de la Cruz, Fray Diego de Leon; in all of them was that passion for the unseen which Philip felt in the pictures of El Greco: they seemed to have the power to touch the incorporeal and see the invisible. They were Spaniards of their age, in whom were tremulous all the mighty exploits of a great nation: their fancies were rich with the glories of America and the green islands of the Caribbean Sea; in their veins was the power that had come from age-long battling with the Moor; they were proud,

for they were masters of the world; and they felt in themselves the wide distances, the tawny wastes, the snow-capped mountains of Castile, the sunshine and the blue sky, and the flowering plains of Andalusia. Life was passionate and manifold, and because it offered so much they felt a restless yearning for something more; because they were human they were unsatisfied; and they threw this eager vitality of theirs into a vehement striving after the ineffable. Athelny was not displeased to find someone to whom he could read the translations with which for some time he had amused his leisure; and in his fine, vibrating voice he recited the canticle of the Soul and Christ her lover, the lovely poem which begins with the words *en una noche oscura,* and the *noche serena* of Fray Luis de Leon. He had translated them quite simply, not without skill, and he had found words which at all events suggested the rough-hewn grandeur of the original. The pictures of El Greco explained them, and they explained the pictures.

Philip had cultivated a certain disdain for idealism. He had always had a passion for life, and the idealism he had come across seemed to him for the most part a cowardly shrinking from it. The idealist withdrew himself, because he could not suffer the jostling of the human crowd; he had not the strength to fight and so called the battle vulgar; he was vain, and since his fellows would not take him at his own estimate, consoled himself with despising his fellows. For Philip his type was Hayward, fair, languid, too fat now and rather bald, still cherishing the remains of his good looks and still delicately proposing to do exquisite things in the uncertain future; and at the back of this were whiskey and vulgar amours of the street. It was in reaction from what Hayward represented that Philip clamoured for life as it stood: sordidness, vice, deformity, did not offend him; he declared that he wanted man in his nakedness; and he rubbed his hands when an instance came before him of meanness, cruelty, selfishness, or lust: that was the real thing. In Paris he had learned that there was neither ugliness nor beauty, but only truth: the search after beauty was sentimental. Had he not painted an advertisement of *chocolat Menier* in a landscape in order to escape from the tyranny of prettiness?

But here he seemed to divine something new. He had been coming to it, all hesitating, for some time, but only now was conscious of the fact; he felt himself on the brink of a discovery. He felt vaguely that here was something better than the realism which he had adored; but certainly it was not the bloodless idealism which stepped aside from life in weakness; it was too strong; it was

virile; it accepted life in all its vivacity, ugliness and beauty, squalor and heroism; it was realism still; but it was realism carried to some higher pitch, in which facts were transformed by the more vivid light in which they were seen. He seemed to see things more profoundly through the grave eyes of those dead noblemen of Castile; and the gestures of the saints, which at first had seemed wild and distorted, appeared to have some mysterious significance. But he could not tell what that significance was. It was like a message which it was very important for him to receive, but it was given him in an unknown tongue, and he could not understand. He was always seeking for a meaning in life, and here it seemed to him that a meaning was offered; but it was obscure and vague. He was profoundly troubled. He saw what looked like the truth as by flashes of lightning on a dark, stormy night you might see a mountain range. He seemed to see that a man need not leave his life to chance, but that his will was powerful; he seemed to see that self-control might be as passionate and as active as the surrender to passion; he seemed to see that the inward life might be as manifold, as varied, as rich with experience, as the life of one who conquered realms and explored unknown lands.

LXXXIX

THE conversation between Philip and Athelny was broken into by a clatter up the stairs. Athelny opened the door for the children coming back from Sunday school, and with laughter and shouting they came in. Gaily he asked them what they had learned. Sally appeared for a moment, with instructions from her mother that father was to amuse the children while she got tea ready; and Athelny began to tell them one of Hans Andersen's stories. They were not shy children, and they quickly came to the conclusion that Philip was not formidable. Jane came and stood by him and presently settled herself on his knees. It was the first time that Philip in his lonely life had been present in a family circle: his eyes smiled as they rested on the fair children engrossed in the fairy tale. The life of his new friend, eccentric as it appeared at first glance, seemed now to have the beauty of perfect naturalness. Sally came in once more.

"Now then, children, tea's ready," she said.

Jane slipped off Philip's knees, and they all went back to the kitchen. Sally began to lay the cloth on the long Spanish table.

"Mother says, shall she come and have tea with you?" she asked. "I can give the children their tea."

"Tell your mother that we shall be proud and honoured if she will favour us with her company," said Athelny.

It seemed to Philip that he could never say anything without an oratorical flourish.

"Then I'll lay for her," said Sally.

She came back again in a moment with a tray on which were a cottage loaf, a slab of butter, and a jar of strawberry jam. While she placed the things on the table her father chaffed her. He said it was quite time she was walking out; he told Philip that she was very proud, and would have nothing to do with aspirants to that honour who lined up at the door, two by two, outside the Sunday school and craved the honour of escorting her home.

"You do talk, father," said Sally, with her slow, good-natured smile.

"You wouldn't think to look at her that a tailor's assistant has enlisted in the army because she would not say how d'you do to him

and an electrical engineer, an electrical engineer, mind you, has taken to drink because she refused to share her hymn-book with him in church. I shudder to think what will happen when she puts her hair up."

"Mother'll bring the tea along herself," said Sally.

"Sally never pays any attention to me," laughed Athelny, looking at her with fond, proud eyes. "She goes about her business indifferent to wars, revolutions, and cataclysms. What a wife she'll make to an honest man!"

Mrs. Athelny brought in the tea. She sat down and proceeded to cut bread and butter. It amused Philip to see that she treated her husband as though he were a child. She spread jam for him and cut up the bread and butter into convenient slices for him to eat. She had taken off her hat; and in her Sunday dress, which seemed a little tight for her, she looked like one of the farmer's wives whom Philip used to call on sometimes with his uncle when he was a small boy. Then he knew why the sound of her voice was familiar to him. She spoke just like the people round Blackstable.

"What part of the country d'you come from?" he asked her.

"I'm a Kentish woman. I come from Ferne."

"I thought as much. My uncle's Vicar of Blackstable."

"That's a funny thing now," she said. "I was wondering in church just now whether you was any connection of Mr. Carey. Many's the time I've seen 'im. A cousin of mine married Mr. Barker of Roxley Farm, over by Blackstable Church, and I used to go and stay there often when I was a girl. Isn't that a funny thing now?"

She looked at him with a new interest, and a brightness came into her faded eyes. She asked him whether he knew Ferne. It was a pretty village about ten miles across country from Blackstable, and the Vicar had come over sometimes to Blackstable for the harvest thanksgiving. She mentioned names of various farmers in the neighbourhood. She was delighted to talk again of the country in which her youth was spent, and it was a pleasure to her to recall scenes and people that had remained in her memory with the tenacity peculiar to her class. It gave Philip a queer sensation too. A breath of the country-side seemed to be wafted into that panelled room in the middle of London. He seemed to see the fat Kentish fields with their stately elms; and his nostrils dilated with the scent of the air; it is laden with the salt of the North Sea, and that makes it keen and sharp.

Philip did not leave the Athelnys' till ten o'clock. The children

came in to say good-night at eight and quite naturally put up their faces for Philip to kiss. His heart went out to them. Sally only held out her hand.

"Sally never kisses gentlemen till she's seen them twice," said her father.

"You must ask me again then," said Philip.

"You mustn't take any notice of what father says," remarked Sally, with a smile.

"She's a most self-possessed young woman," added her parent.

They had supper of bread and cheese and beer, while Mrs. Athelny was putting the children to bed; and when Philip went into the kitchen to bid her good-night (she had been sitting there, resting herself and reading *The Weekly Despatch*) she invited him cordially to come again.

"There's always a good dinner on Sundays so long as Athelny's in work," she said, "and it's a charity to come and talk to him."

On the following Saturday Philip received a postcard from Athelny saying that they were expecting him to dinner next day but fearing their means were not such that Mr. Athelny would desire him to accept, Philip wrote back that he would only come to tea. He bought a large plum cake so that his entertainment should cost nothing. He found the whole family glad to see him, and the cake completed his conquest of the children. He insisted that they should all have tea together in the kitchen, and the meal was noisy and hilarious.

Soon Philip got into the habit of going to Athelny's every Sunday. He became a great favourite with the children, because he was simple and unaffected and because it was so plain that he was fond of them. As soon as they heard his ring at the door one of them popped a head out of window to make sure it was he, and then they all rushed downstairs tumultuously to let him in. They flung themselves into his arms. At tea they fought for the privilege of sitting next to him. Soon they began to call him Uncle Philip.

Athelny was very communicative, and little by little Philip learned the various stages of his life. He had followed many occupations, and it occurred to Philip that he managed to make a mess of everything he attempted. He had been on a tea plantation in Ceylon and a traveller in America for Italian wines; his secretaryship of the water company in Toledo had lasted longer than any of his employments; he had been a journalist and for some time had worked as police-court reporter for an evening paper; he had been sub-editor of a paper in the Midlands and editor of another on the Riviera. From all his occupations he had

gathered amusing anecdotes, which he told with a keen pleasure in his own powers of entertainment. He had read a great deal, chiefly delighting in books which were unusual; and he poured forth his stores of abstruse knowledge with childlike enjoyment of the amazement of his hearers. Three or four years before abject poverty had driven him to take the job of press-representative to a large firm of drapers; and though he felt the work unworthy his abilities, which he rated highly, the firmness of his wife and the needs of his family had made him stick to it.

XC

When he left the Athelnys Philip walked down Chancery Lane and along the Strand to get a 'bus at the top of Parliament Street. One Sunday, when he had known them about six weeks, he did this as usual, but he found the Kennington 'bus full. It was June, but it had rained during the day and the night was raw and cold. He walked up to Piccadilly Circus in order to get a seat; the 'bus waited at the fountain, and when it arrived there seldom had more than two or three people in it. This service ran every quarter of an hour, and he had some time to wait. He looked idly at the crowd. The public-houses were closing, and there were many people about. His mind was busy with the ideas Athelny had the charming gift of suggesting.

Suddenly his heart stood still. He saw Mildred. He had not thought of her for weeks. She was crossing over from the corner of Shaftesbury Avenue and stopped at the shelter till a string of cabs passed by. She was watching her opportunity and had no eyes for anything else. She wore a large black straw hat with a mass of feathers on it and a black silk dress; at that time it was fashionable for women to wear trains; the road was clear, and Mildred crossed, her skirt trailing on the ground, and walked down Piccadilly. Philip, his heart beating excitedly, followed her. He did not wish to speak to her, but he wondered where she was going at that hour; he wanted to get a look at her face. She walked slowly along and turned down Air Street and so got through into Regent Street. She walked up again towards the Circus. Philip was puzzled. He could not make out what she was doing. Perhaps she was waiting for somebody, and he felt a great curiosity to know who it was. She overtook a short man in a bowler hat, who was strolling very slowly in the same direction as herself; she gave him a sidelong glance as she passed. She walked a few steps more till she came to Swan and Edgar's, then stopped and waited, facing the road. When the man came up she smiled. The man stared at her for a moment, turned away his head, and sauntered on. Then Philip understood.

He was overwhelmed with horror. For a moment he felt such a weakness in his legs that he could hardly stand; then he walked after her quickly; he touched her on the arm.

"Mildred."

She turned round with a violent start. He thought that she reddened, but in the obscurity he could not see very well. For a while they stood and looked at one another without speaking. At last she said:

"Fancy seeing you!"

He did not know what to answer; he was horribly shaken; and the phrases that chased one another through his brain seemed incredibly melodramatic.

"It's awful," he gasped, almost to himself.

She did not say anything more, she turned away from him, and looked down at the pavement. He felt that his face was distorted with misery.

"Isn't there anywhere we can go and talk?"

"I don't want to talk," she said sullenly. "Leave me alone, can't you?"

The thought struck him that perhaps she was in urgent need of money and could not afford to go away at that hour.

"I've got a couple of sovereigns on me if you're hard up," he blurted out.

"I don't know what you mean. I was just walking along here on my way back to my lodgings. I expected to meet one of the girls from where I work."

"For God's sake don't lie now," he said.

Then he saw that she was crying, and he repeated his question.

"Can't we go and talk somewhere? Can't I come back to your rooms?"

"No, you can't do that," she sobbed. "I'm not allowed to take gentlemen in there. If you like I'll meet you to-morrow."

He felt certain that she would not keep an appointment. He was not going to let her go.

"No. You must take me somewhere now."

"Well, there is a room I know, but they'll charge six shillings for it."

"I don't mind that. Where is it?"

She gave him the address, and he called a cab. They drove to a shabby street beyond the British Museum in the neighbourhood of the Gray's Inn Road, and she stopped the cab at the corner.

"They don't like you to drive up to the door," she said.

They were the first words either of them had spoken since getting into the cab. They walked a few yards and Mildred knocked three times, sharply, at a door. Philip noticed in the fanlight a cardboard on which was an announcement that apart-

ments were to let. The door was opened quietly, and an elderly, tall woman let them in. She gave Philip a stare and then spoke to Mildred in an undertone. Mildred led Philip along a passage to a room at the back. It was quite dark; she asked him for a match, and lit the gas; there was no globe, and the gas flared shrilly. Philip saw that he was in a dingy little bedroom with a suite of furniture painted to look like pine much too large for it; the lace curtains were very dirty; the grate was hidden by a large paper fan. Mildred sank on the chair which stood by the side of the chimney-piece. Philip sat on the edge of the bed. He felt ashamed. He saw now that Mildred's cheeks were thick with rouge, her eyebrows were blackened; but she looked thin and ill, and the red on her cheeks exaggerated the greenish pallor of her skin. She stared at the paper fan in a listless fashion. Philip could not think what to say, and he had a choking in his throat as if he were going to cry. He covered his eyes with his hands.

"My God, it is awful," he groaned.

"I don't know what you've got to fuss about. I should have thought you'd have been rather pleased."

Philip did not answer, and in a moment she broke into a sob.

"You don't think I do it because I like it, do you?"

"Oh, my dear," he cried. "I'm so sorry, I'm so awfully sorry."

"That'll do me a fat lot of good."

Again Philip found nothing to say. He was desperately afraid of saying anything which she might take for a reproach or a sneer.

"Where's the baby?" he asked at last.

"I've got her with me in London. I hadn't got the money to keep her on at Brighton, so I had to take her. I've got a room up Highbury way. I told them I was on the stage. It's a long way to have to come down to the West End every day, but it's a rare job to find anyone who'll let to ladies at all."

"Wouldn't they take you back at the shop?"

"I couldn't get any work to do anywhere. I walked my legs off looking for work. I did get a job once, but I was off for a week because I was queer, and when I went back they said they didn't want me any more. You can't blame them either, can you? Them places, they can't afford to have girls that aren't strong."

"You don't look very well now," said Philip.

"I wasn't fit to come out tonight, but I couldn't help myself, I wanted the money. I wrote to Emil and told him I was broke, but he never even answered the letter."

"You might have written to me."

"I didn't like to, not after what happened, and I didn't want you to know I was in difficulties. I shouldn't have been surprised if you'd just told me I'd only got what I deserved."

"You don't know me very well, do you, even now?"

For a moment he remembered all the anguish he had suffered on her account, and he was sick with the recollection of his pain. But it was no more than recollection. When he looked at her he knew that he no longer loved her. He was very sorry for her, but he was glad to be free. Watching her gravely, he asked himself why he had been so besotted with passion for her.

"You're a gentleman in every sense of the word," she said. "You're the only one I've ever met." She paused for a minute and then flushed. "I hate asking you, Philip, but can you spare me anything?"

"It's lucky I've got some money on me. I'm afraid I've only got two pounds."

He gave her the sovereigns.

"I'll pay you back, Philip."

"Oh, that's all right," he smiled. "You needn't worry."

He had said nothing that he wanted to say. They had talked as if the whole thing were natural; and it looked as though she would go now, back to the horror of her life, and he would be able to do nothing to prevent it. She had got up to take the money, and they were both standing.

"Am I keeping you?" she asked. "I suppose you want to be getting home."

"No, I'm in no hurry," he answered.

"I'm glad to have a chance of sitting down."

Those words, with all they implied, tore his heart, and it was dreadfully painful to see the weary way in which she sank back into the chair. The silence lasted so long that Philip in his embarrassment lit a cigarette.

"It's very good of you not to have said anything disagreeable to me, Philip. I thought you might say I didn't know what all."

He saw that she was crying again. He remembered how she had come to him when Emil Miller had deserted her and how she had wept. The recollection of her suffering and of his own humiliation seemed to render more overwhelming the compassion he felt now.

"If I could only get out of it!" she moaned. "I hate it so. I'm unfit for the life, I'm not the sort of girl for that. I'd do anything to get away from it, I'd be a servant if I could. Oh, I wish I was dead."

And in pity for herself she broke down now completely. She sobbed hysterically, and her thin body was shaken.

"Oh, you don't know what it is. Nobody knows till they've done it."

Philip could not bear to see her cry. He was tortured by the horror of her position.

"Poor child," he whispered. "Poor child."

He was deeply moved. Suddenly he had an inspiration. It filled him with a perfect ecstasy of happiness.

"Look here, if you want to get away from it, I've got an idea. I'm frightfully hard up just now, I've got to be as economical as I can; but I've got a sort of little flat now in Kennington and I've got a spare room. If you like you and the baby can come and live there. I pay a woman three and sixpence a week to keep the place clean and to do a little cooking for me. You could do that and your food wouldn't come to much more than the money I should save on her. It doesn't cost any more to feed two than one, and I don't suppose the baby eats much."

She stopped crying and looked at him.

"D'you mean to say that you could take me back after all that's happened?"

Philip flushed a little in embarrassment at what he had to say.

"I don't want you to mistake me. I'm just giving you a room which doesn't cost me anything and your food. I don't expect anything more from you than that you should do exactly the same as the woman I have in does. Except for that I don't want anything from you at all. I daresay you can cook well enough for that."

She sprang to her feet and was about to come towards him.

"You are good to me, Philip."

"No, please stop where you are," he said hurriedly, putting out his hand as though to push her away.

He did not know why it was, but he could not bear the thought that she should touch him.

"I don't want to be anything more than a friend to you."

"You are good to me," she repeated. "You are good to me."

"Does that mean you'll come?"

"Oh, yes, I'd do anything to get away from this. You'll never regret what you've done, Philip, never. When can I come, Philip?"

"You'd better come tomorrow."

Suddenly she burst into tears again.

"What on earth are you crying for now?" he smiled.

"I'm so grateful to you. I don't know how I can ever make it up to you?"

"Oh, that's all right. You'd better go home now."

He wrote out the address and told her that if she came at half past five he would be ready for her. It was so late that he had to walk home, but it did not seem a long way, for he was intoxicated with delight; he seemed to walk on air.

XCI

Next day he got up early to make the room ready for Mildred. He told the woman who had looked after him that he would not want her any more. Mildred came about six, and Philip, who was watching from the window, went down to let her in and help her to bring up the luggage: it consisted now of no more than three large parcels wrapped in brown paper, for she had been obliged to sell everything that was not absolutely needful. She wore the same black silk dress she had worn the night before, and, though she had now no rouge on her cheeks, there was still about her eyes the black which remained after a perfunctory wash in the morning: it made her look very ill. She was a pathetic figure as she stepped out of the cab with the baby in her arms. She seemed a little shy, and they found nothing but commonplace things to say to one another.

"So you've got here all right."

"I've never lived in this part of London before."

Philip showed her the room. It was that in which Cronshaw had died. Philip, though he thought it absurd, had never liked the idea of going back to it; and since Cronshaw's death he had remained in the little room, sleeping on a fold-up bed, into which he had first moved in order to make his friend comfortable. The baby was sleeping placidly.

"You don't recognise her, I expect," said Mildred.

"I've not seen her since we took her down to Brighton."

"Where shall I put her? She's so heavy I can't carry her very long."

"I'm afraid I haven't got a cradle," said Philip, with a nervous laugh.

"Oh, she'll sleep with me. She always does."

Mildred put the baby in an arm-chair and looked round the room. She recognised most of the things which she had known in his old diggings. Only one thing was new, a head and shoulders of Philip which Lawson had painted at the end of the preceding summer; it hung over the chimney-piece; Mildred looked at it critically.

"In some ways I like it and in some ways I don't. I think you're better looking than that."

"Things are looking up," laughed Philip. "You've never told me I was good-looking before."

"I'm not one to worry myself about a man's looks. I don't like good-looking men. They're too conceited for me."

Her eyes travelled round the room in an instinctive search for a looking-glass, but there was none; she put up her hand and patted her large fringe.

"What'll the other people in the house say to my being here?" she asked suddenly.

"Oh, there's only a man and his wife living here. He's out all day, and I never see her except on Saturday to pay my rent. They keep entirely to themselves. I've not spoken two words to either of them since I came."

Mildred went into the bedroom to undo her things and put them away. Philip tried to read, but his spirits were too high: he leaned back in his chair, smoking a cigarette, and with smiling eyes looked at the sleeping child. He felt very happy. He was quite sure than he was not at all in love with Mildred. He was surprised that the old feeling had left him so completely; he discerned in himself a faint physical repulsion from her; and he thought that if he touched her it would give him goose-flesh. He could not understand himself. Presently, knocking at the door, she came in again.

"I say, you needn't knock," he said. "Have you made the tour of the mansion?"

"It's the smallest kitchen I've ever seen."

"You'll find it large enough to cook our sumptuous repasts," he retorted lightly.

"I see there's nothing in. I'd better go out and get something."

"Yes, but I venture to remind you that we must be devilish economical."

"What shall I get for supper?"

"You'd better get what you think you can cook," laughed Philip.

He gave her some money and she went out. She came in half an hour later and put her purchases on the table. She was out of breath from climbing the stairs.

"I say, you are anæmic," said Philip. "I'll have to dose you with Blaud's Pills."

"It took me some time to find the shops. I bought some liver. That's tasty, isn't it? And you can't eat much of it, so it's more economical than butcher's meat."

There was a gas stove in the kitchen, and when she had put

the liver on, Mildred came into the sitting-room to lay the cloth.

"Why are you only laying one place?" asked Philip. "Aren't you going to eat anything?"

Mildred flushed.

"I thought you mightn't like me to have my meals with you."

"Why on earth not?"

"Well, I'm only a servant, aren't I?"

"Don't be an ass. How can you be so silly?"

He smiled, but her humility gave him a curious twist in his heart. Poor thing! He remembered what she had been when first he knew her. He hesitated for an instant.

"Don't think I'm conferring any benefit on you," he said. "It's simply a business arrangement, I'm giving you board and lodging in return for your work. You don't owe me anything. And there's nothing humiliating to you in it."

She did not answer, but tears rolled heavily down her cheeks. Philip knew from his experience at the hospital that women of her class looked upon service as degrading: he could not help feeling a little impatient with her; but he blamed himself, for it was clear that she was tired and ill. He got up and helped her to lay another place at the table. The baby was awake now, and Mildred had prepared some Mellin's Food for it. The liver and bacon were ready and they sat down. For economy's sake Philip had given up drinking anything but water, but he had in the house half a bottle of whiskey, and he thought a little would do Mildred good. He did his best to make the supper pass cheerfully, but Mildred was subdued and exhausted. When they had finished she got up to put the baby to bed.

"I think you'll do well to turn in early yourself," said Philip. "You look absolutely done up."

"I think I will after I've washed up."

Philip lit his pipe and began to read. It was pleasant to hear somebody moving about in the next room. Sometimes his loneliness had oppressed him. Mildred came in to clear the table, and he heard the clatter of plates as she washed up. Philip smiled as he thought how characteristic it was of her that she should do all that in a black silk dress. But he had work to do, and he brought his book up to the table. He was reading Osler's *Medicine*, which had recently taken the place in the students' favour of Taylor's work, for many years the text-book most in use. Presently Mildred came in, rolling down her sleeves. Philip gave her a casual glance, but did not move; the occasion was curious, and he felt a little

nervous. He feared that Mildred might imagine ne was going to make a nuisance of himself, and he did not quite know how without brutality to reassure her.

"By the way, I've got a lecture at nine, so I should want breakfast at a quarter past eight. Can you manage that?"

"Oh, yes. Why, when I was in Parliament Street I used to catch the eight-twelve from Herne Hill every morning."

"I hope you'll find your room comfortable. You'll be a different woman tomorrow after a long night in bed."

"I suppose you work till late?"

"I generally work till about eleven or half-past."

"I'll say good-night then."

"Good-night."

The table was between them. He did not offer to shake hands with her. She shut the door quietly. He heard her moving about in the bedroom, and in a little while he heard the creaking of the bed as she got in.

XCII

THE following day was Tuesday. Philip as usual hurried through his breakfast and dashed off to get to his lecture at nine. He had only time to exchange a few words with Mildred. When he came back in the evening he found her seated at the window, darning his socks.

"I say, you are industrious," he smiled. "What have you been doing with yourself all day?"

"Oh, I gave the place a good cleaning and then I took baby out for a little."

She was wearing an old black dress, the same as she had worn as uniform when she served in the tea-shop; it was shabby, but she looked better in it than in the silk of the day before. The baby was sitting on the floor. She looked up at Philip with large, mysterious eyes and broke into a laugh when he sat down beside her and began playing with her bare toes. The afternoon sun came into the room and shed a mellow light.

"It's rather jolly to come back and find someone about the place. A woman and a baby make very good decoration in a room."

He had gone to the hospital dispensary and got a bottle of Blaud's Pills. He gave them to Mildred and told her she must take them after each meal. It was a remedy she was used to, for she had taken it off and on ever since she was sixteen.

"I'm sure Lawson would love that green skin of yours," said Philip. "He'd say it was so paintable, but I'm terribly matter of fact nowadays, and I shan't be happy till you're as pink and white as a milkmaid."

"I feel better already."

After a frugal supper Philip filled his pouch with tobacco and put on his hat. It was on Tuesdays that he generally went to the tavern in Beak Street, and he was glad that this day came so soon after Mildred's arrival, for he wanted to make his relations with her perfectly clear.

"Are you going out?" she said.

"Yes, on Tuesdays I give myself a night off. I shall see you tomorrow. Good-night."

Philip always went to the tavern with a sense of pleasure. Macalister, the philosophic stockbroker, was generally there and

glad to argue upon any subject under the sun; Hayward came regularly when he was in London; and though he and Macalister disliked one another they continued out of habit to meet on that one evening in the week. Macalister thought Hayward a poor creature, and sneered at his delicacies of sentiment: he asked satirically about Hayward's literary work and received with scornful smiles his vague suggestions of future masterpieces; their arguments were often heated; but the punch was good, and they were both fond of it; towards the end of the evening they generally composed their differences and thought each other capital fellows. This evening Philip found them both there, and Lawson also; Lawson came more seldom now that he was beginning to know people in London and went out to dinner a good deal. They were all on excellent terms with themselves, for Macalister had given them a good thing on the Stock Exchange, and Hayward and Lawson had made fifty pounds apiece. It was a great thing for Lawson, who was extravagant and earned little money: he had arrived at that stage of the portrait-painter's career when he was noticed a good deal by the critics and found a number of aristocratic ladies who were willing to allow him to paint them for nothing (it advertised them both, and gave the great ladies quite an air of patronesses of the arts); but he very seldom got hold of the solid philistine who was ready to pay good money for a portrait of his wife. Lawson was brimming over with satisfaction.

"It's the most ripping way of making money that I've ever struck," he cried. "I didn't have to put my hand in my pocket for sixpence."

"You lost something by not being here last Tuesday, young man," said Macalister to Philip.

"My God, why didn't you write to me?" said Philip. "If you only knew how useful a hundred pounds would be to me."

"Oh, there wasn't time for that. One has to be on the spot. I heard of a good thing last Tuesday, and I asked these fellows if they'd like to have a flutter. I bought them a thousand shares on Wednesday morning, and there was a rise in the afternoon so I sold them at once. I made fifty pounds for each of them and a couple of hundred for myself."

Philip was sick with envy. He had recently sold the last mortgage in which his small fortune had been invested and now had only six hundred pounds left. He was panic-stricken sometimes when he thought of the future. He had still to keep himself for two years before he could be qualified, and then he meant to try for hospital appointments, so that he could not expect to earn

anything for three years at least. With the most rigid economy he would not have more than a hundred pounds left then. It was very little to have as a stand-by in case he was ill and could not earn money or found himself at any time without work. A lucky gamble would make all the difference to him.

"Oh, well, it doesn't matter," said Macalister. "Something is sure to turn up soon. There'll be a boom in South Africans again one of these days, and then I'll see what I can do for you."

Macalister was in the Kaffir market and often told them stories of the sudden fortunes that had been made in the great boom of a year or two back.

"Well, don't forget next time."

They sat on talking till nearly midnight, and Philip, who lived furthest off, was the first to go. If he did not catch the last tram he had to walk, and that made him very late. As it was he did not reach home till nearly half past twelve. When he got upstairs he was surprised to find Mildred still sitting in his arm-chair.

"Why on earth aren't you in bed?" he cried.

"I wasn't sleepy."

"You ought to go to bed all the same. It would rest you."

She did not move. He noticed that since supper she had changed into her black silk dress.

"I thought I'd rather wait up for you in case you wanted anything."

She looked at him, and the shadow of a smile played upon her thin pale lips. Philip was not sure whether he understood or not. He was slightly embarrassed, but assumed a cheerful, matter-of-fact air.

"It's very nice of you, but it's very naughty also. Run off to bed as fast as you can, or you won't be able to get up tomorrow morning."

"I don't feel like going to bed."

"Nonsense," he said coldly.

She got up, a little sulkily, and went into her room. He smiled when he heard her lock the door loudly.

The next few days passed without incident. Mildred settled down in her new surroundings. When Philip hurried off after breakfast she had the whole morning to do the housework. They ate very simply, but she liked to take a long time to buy the few things they needed; she could not be bothered to cook anything for her dinner, but made herself some cocoa and ate bread and butter; then she took the baby out in the go-cart, and when she came in spent the rest of the afternoon in idleness. She was tired out, and it

suited her to do so little. She made friends with Philip's forbidding landlady over the rent, which he left with Mildred to pay, and within a week was able to tell him more about his neighbours than he had learned in a year.

"She's a very nice woman," said Mildred. "Quite the lady. I told her we was married."

"D'you think that was necessary?"

"Well, I had to tell her something. It looks so funny me being here and not married to you. I didn't know what she'd think of me."

"I don't suppose she believed you for a moment."

"That she did, I lay. I told her we'd been married two years—I had to say that, you know, because of baby—only your people wouldn't hear of it, because you was only a student"—she pronounced it stoodent—"and so we had to keep it a secret, but they'd given way now and we were all going down to stay with them in the summer."

"You're a past mistress of the cock-and-bull story," said Philip.

He was vaguely irritated that Mildred still had this passion for telling fibs. In the last two years she had learnt nothing. But he shrugged his shoulders.

"When all's said and done," he reflected, "she hasn't had much chance."

It was a beautiful evening, warm and cloudless, and the people of South London seemed to have poured out into the streets. There was that restlessness in the air which seizes the cockney sometimes when a turn in the weather calls him into the open. After Mildred had cleared away the supper she went and stood at the window. The street noises came up to them, noises of people calling to one another, of the passing traffic, of a barrel-organ in the distance.

"I suppose you must work tonight, Philip?" she asked him, with a wistful expression.

"I ought, but I don't know that I must. Why, d'you want me to do anything else?"

"I'd like to go out for a bit. Couldn't we take a ride on the top of a tram?"

"If you like."

"I'll just go and put on my hat," she said joyfully.

The night made it almost impossible to stay indoors. The baby was asleep and could be safely left; Mildred said she had always left it alone at night when she went out; it never woke. She was in high spirits when she came back with her hat on. She had taken the opportunity to put on a little rouge. Philip thought it

was excitement which had brought a faint colour to her pale cheeks; he was touched by her child-like delight, and reproached himself for the austerity with which he had treated her. She laughed when she got out into the air. The first tram they saw was going towards Westminster Bridge and they got on it. Philip smoked his pipe, and they looked at the crowded street. The shops were open, gaily lit, and people were doing their shopping for the next day. They passed a music-hall called the Canterbury and Mildred cried out:

"Oh, Philip, do let's go there. I haven't been to a music-hall for months."

"We can't afford stalls, you know."

"Oh, I don't mind, I shall be quite happy in the gallery."

They got down and walked back a hundred yards till they came to the doors. They got capital seats for sixpence each, high up but not in the gallery, and the night was so fine that there was plenty of room. Mildred's eyes glistened. She enjoyed herself thoroughly. There was a simple-mindedness in her which touched Philip. She was a puzzle to him. Certain things in her still pleased him, and he thought that there was a lot in her which was very good: she had been badly brought up, and her life was hard; he had blamed her for much that she could not help; and it was his own fault if he had asked virtues from her which it was not in her power to give. Under different circumstances she might have been a charming girl. She was extraordinarily unfit for the battle of life. As he watched her now in profile, her mouth slightly open and that delicate flush on her cheeks, he thought she looked strangely virginal. He felt an overwhelming compassion for her, and with all his heart he forgave her for the misery she had caused him. The smoky atmosphere made Philip's eyes ache, but when he suggested going she turned to him with beseeching face and asked him to stay till the end. He smiled and consented. She took his hand and held it for the rest of the performance. When they streamed out with the audience into the crowded street she did not want to go home; they wandered up the Westminster Bridge Road, looking at the people.

"I've not had such a good time as this for months," she said.

Philip's heart was full, and he was thankful to the fates because he had carried out his sudden impulse to take Mildred and her baby into his flat. It was very pleasant to see her happy gratitude. At last she grew tired and they jumped on a tram to go home; it was late now, and when they got down and turned into their own street there was no one about. Mildred slipped her arm through his.

"It's just like old times, Phil," she said.

She had never called him Phil before, that was what Griffiths called him; and even now it gave him a curious pang. He remembered how much he had wanted to die then; his pain had been so great that he had thought quite seriously of committing suicide. It all seemed very long ago. He smiled at his past self. Now he felt nothing for Mildred but infinite pity. They reached the house, and when they got into the sitting-room Philip lit the gas.

"Is the baby all right?" he asked.

"I'll just go in and see."

When she came back it was to say that it had not stirred since she left it. It was a wonderful child. Philip held out his hand.

"Well, good-night."

"D'you want to go to bed already?"

"It's nearly one. I'm not used to late hours these days," said Philip.

She took his hand and holding it looked into his eyes with a little smile.

"Phil, the other night in that room, when you asked me to come and stay here, I didn't mean what you thought I meant, when you said you didn't want me to be anything to you except just to cook and that sort of thing."

"Didn't you?" answered Philip, withdrawing his hand. "I did."

"Don't be such an old silly," she laughed.

He shook his head.

"I meant it quite seriously. I shouldn't have asked you to stay here on any other condition."

"Why not?"

"I feel I couldn't. I can't explain it, but it would spoil it all."

She shrugged her shoulders.

"Oh, very well, it's just as you choose. I'm not one to go down on my hands and knees for that, and chance it."

She went out, slamming the door behind her.

XCIII

Next morning Mildred was sulky and taciturn. She remained in her room till it was time to get the dinner ready. She was a bad cook and could do little more than chops and steaks; and she did not know how to use up odds and ends, so that Philip was obliged to spend more money than he had expected. When she served up she sat down opposite Philip, but would eat nothing; he remarked on it; she said she had a bad headache and was not hungry. He was glad that he had somewhere to spend the rest of the day; the Athelnys were cheerful and friendly: it was a delightful and an unexpected thing to realise that everyone in that household looked forward with pleasure to his visit. Mildred had gone to bed when he came back, but next day she was still silent. At supper she sat with a haughty expression on her face and a little frown between her eyes. It made Philip impatient, but he told himself that he must be considerate to her; he was bound to make allowance.

"You're very silent," he said, with a pleasant smile.

"I'm paid to cook and clean, I didn't know I was expected to talk as well."

He thought it an ungracious answer, but if they were going to live together he must do all he could to make things go easily.

"I'm afraid you're cross with me about the other night," he said.

It was an awkward thing to speak about, but apparently it was necessary to discuss it.

"I don't know what you mean," she answered.

"Please don't be angry with me. I should never have asked you to come and live here if I'd not meant our relations to be merely friendly. I suggested it because I thought you wanted a home and you would have a chance of looking about for something to do."

"Oh, don't think I care."

"I don't for a moment," he hastened to say. "You mustn't think I'm ungrateful. I realise that you only proposed it for my sake. It's just a feeling I have, and I can't help it, it would make the whole thing ugly and horrid."

"You are funny," she said, looking at him curiously. "I can't make you out."

She was not angry with him now, but puzzled; she had no idea

what he meant: she accepted the situation, she had indeed a vague feeling that he was behaving in a very noble fashion and that she ought to admire it; but also she felt inclined to laugh at him and perhaps even to despise him a little.

"He's a rum customer," she thought.

Life went smoothly enough with them. Philip spent all day at the hospital and worked at home in the evening except when he went to the Athelnys or to the tavern in Beak Street. Once the physician for whom he clerked asked him to a solemn dinner, and two or three times he went to parties given by fellow-students. Mildred accepted the monotony of her life. If she minded that Philip left her sometimes by herself in the evening she never mentioned it. Occasionally he took her to a music-hall. He carried out his intention that the only tie between them should be the domestic service she did in return for board and lodging. She had made up her mind that it was no use trying to get work that summer, and with Philip's approval determined to stay where she was till the autumn. She thought it would be easy to get something to do then.

"As far as I'm concerned you can stay on here when you've got a job if it's convenient. The room's there, and the woman who did for me before can come in to look after the baby."

He grew very much attached to Mildred's child. He had a naturally affectionate disposition, which had had little opportunity to display itself. Mildred was not unkind to the little girl. She looked after her very well and once when she had a bad cold proved herself a devoted nurse; but the child bored her, and she spoke to her sharply when she bothered; she was fond of her, but had not the maternal passion which might have induced her to forget herself. Mildred had no demonstrativeness, and she found the manifestations of affection ridiculous. When Philip sat with the baby on his knees, playing with it and kissing it, she laughed at him.

"You couldn't make more fuss of her if you was her father," she said. "You're perfectly silly with the child."

Philip flushed, for he hated to be laughed at. It was absurd to be so devoted to another man's baby, and he was a little ashamed of the overflowing of his heart. But the child, feeling Philip's attachment, would put her face against his or nestle in his arms.

"It's all very fine for you," said Mildred. "You don't have any of the disagreeable part of it. How would you like being kept awake for an hour in the middle of the night because her ladyship wouldn't go to sleep?"

Philip remembered all sorts of things of his childhood which he

thought he had long forgotten. He took hold of the baby's toes.

"This little pig went to market, this little pig stayed at home."

When he came home in the evening and entered the sitting-room his first glance was for the baby sprawling on the floor, and it gave him a little thrill of delight to hear the child's crow of pleasure at seeing him. Mildred taught her to call him daddy, and when the child did this for the first time of her own accord, laughed immoderately.

"I wonder if you're that stuck on baby because she's mine," asked Mildred, "or if you'd be the same with anybody's baby."

"I've never known anybody else's baby, so I can't say," said Philip.

Towards the end of his second term as in-patients' clerk a piece of good fortune befell Philip. It was the middle of July. He went one Tuesday evening to the tavern in Beak Street and found nobody there but Macalister. They sat together, chatting about their absent friends, and after a while Macalister said to him:

"Oh, by the way, I heard of a rather good thing today, New Kleinfonteins; it's a gold mine in Rhodesia. If you'd like to have a flutter you might make a bit."

Philip had been waiting anxiously for such an opportunity, but now that it came he hesitated. He was desperately afraid of losing money. He had little of the gambler's spirit.

"I'd love to, but I don't know if I dare risk it. How much could I lose if things went wrong?"

"I shouldn't have spoken of it, only you seemed so keen about it," Macalister answered coldly.

Philip felt that Macalister looked upon him as rather a donkey.

"I'm awfully keen on making a bit," he laughed.

"You can't make money unless you're prepared to risk money."

Macalister began to talk of other things and Philip, while he was answering him, kept thinking that if the venture turned out well the stockbroker would be very facetious at his expense next time they met. Macalister had a sarcastic tongue.

"I think I will have a flutter if you don't mind," said Philip anxiously.

"All right. I'll buy you two hundred and fifty shares and if I see a half-crown rise I'll sell them at once."

Philip quickly reckoned out how much that would amount to, and his mouth watered; thirty pounds would be a godsend just then, and he thought the fates owed him something. He told Mildred what he had done when he saw her at breakfast next morning. She thought him very silly.

"I never knew anyone who made money on the Stock Exchange," she said. "That's what Emil always said, you can't expect to make money on the Stock Exchange, he said."

Philip bought an evening paper on his way home and turned at once to the money columns. He knew nothing about these things and had difficulty in finding the stock which Macalister had spoken of. He saw they had advanced a quarter. His heart leaped, and then he felt sick with apprehension in case Macalister had forgotten or for some reason had not bought. Macalister had promised to telegraph. Philip could not wait to take a tram home. He jumped into a cab. It was an unwonted extravagance.

"Is there a telegram for me?" he said, as he burst in.

"No," said Mildred.

His face fell, and in bitter disappointment he sank heavily into a chair.

"Then he didn't buy them for me after all. Curse him," he added violently. "What cruel luck! And I've been thinking all day of what I'd do with the money."

"Why, what were you going to do?" she asked.

"What's the good of thinking about that now? Oh, I wanted the money so badly."

She gave a laugh and handed him a telegram.

"I was only having a joke with you. I opened it."

He tore it out of her hands. Macalister had bought him two hundred and fifty shares and sold them at the half-crown profit he had suggested. The commission note was to follow next day. For one moment Philip was furious with Mildred for her cruel jest, but then he could only think of his joy.

"It makes such a difference to me," he cried. "I'll stand you a new dress if you like."

"I want it badly enough," she answered.

"I'll tell you what I'm going to do. I'm going to be operated upon at the end of July."

"Why, have you got something the matter with you?" she interrupted.

It struck her that an illness she did not know might explain what had so much puzzled her. He flushed, for he hated to refer to his deformity.

"No, but they think they can do something to my foot. I couldn't spare the time before, but now it doesn't matter so much. I shall start my dressing in October instead of next month. I shall only be in hospital a few weeks and then we can go away to the sea-

side for the rest of the summer. It'll do us all good, you and the baby and me."

"Oh, let's go to Brighton, Philip, I like Brighton, you get such a nice class of people there."

Philip had vaguely thought of some little fishing village in Cornwall, but as she spoke it occurred to him that Mildred would be bored to death there.

"I don't mind where we go as long as I get the sea."

He did not know why, but he had suddenly an irresistible longing for the sea. He wanted to bathe, and he thought with delight of splashing about in the salt water. He was a good swimmer, and nothing exhilarated him like a rough sea.

"I say, it will be jolly," he cried.

"It'll be like a honeymoon, won't it?" she said. "How much can I have for my new dress, Phil?"

XCIV

PHILIP asked Mr. Jacobs, the assistant-surgeon for whom he had dressed, to do the operation. Jacobs accepted with pleasure, since he was interested just then in neglected talipes and was getting together materials for a paper. He warned Philip that he could not make his foot like the other, but he thought he could do a good deal; and though he would always limp he would be able to wear a boot less unsightly than that which he had been accustomed to. Philip remembered how he had prayed to a God who was able to remove mountains for him who had faith, and he smiled bitterly.

"I don't expect a miracle," he answered.

"I think you're wise to let me try what I can do. You'll find a club-foot rather a handicap in practice. The layman is full of fads, and he doesn't like his doctor to have anything the matter with him."

Philip went into a 'small ward,' which was a room on the landing, outside each ward, reserved for special cases. He remained there a month, for the surgeon would not let him go till he could walk; and, bearing the operation very well, he had a pleasant enough time. Lawson and Athelny came to see him, and one day Mrs. Athelny brought two of her children; students whom he knew looked in now and again to have a chat; Mildred came twice a week. Everyone was very kind to him, and Philip, always surprised when anyone took trouble with him, was touched and grateful. He enjoyed the relief from care; he need not worry there about the future, neither whether his money would last out nor whether he would pass his final examinations; and he could read to his heart's content. He had not been able to read much of late, since Mildred disturbed him: she would make an aimless remark when he was trying to concentrate his attention, and would not be satisfied unless he answered; whenever he was comfortably settled down with a book she would want something done and would come to him with a cork she could not draw or a hammer to drive in a nail.

They settled to go to Brighton in August. Philip wanted to take lodgings, but Mildred said that she would have to do housekeeping, and it would only be a holiday for her if they went to a boarding-house.

"I have to see about the food every day at home, I get that sick of it I want a thorough change."

Philip agreed, and it happened that Mildred knew of a boarding-house at Kemp Town where they would not be charged more than twenty-five shillings a week each. She arranged with Philip to write about rooms, but when he got back to Kennington he found that she had done nothing. He was irritated.

"I shouldn't have thought you had so much to do as all that," he said.

"Well, I can't think of everything. It's not my fault if I forget, is it?"

Philip was so anxious to get to the sea that he would not wait to communicate with the mistress of the boarding-house.

"We'll leave the luggage at the station and go to the house and see if they've got rooms, and if they have we can just send an outside porter for our traps."

"You can please yourself," said Mildred stiffly.

She did not like being reproached, and, retiring huffily into a haughty silence, she sat by listlessly while Philip made the preparations for their departure. The little flat was hot and stuffy under the August sun, and from the road beat up a malodorous sultriness. As he lay in his bed in the small ward with its red, distempered walls he had longed for fresh air and the splashing of the sea against his breast. He felt he would go mad if he had to spend another night in London. Mildred recovered her good temper when she saw the streets of Brighton crowded with people making holiday, and they were both in high spirits as they drove out to Kemp Town. Philip stroked the baby's cheek.

"We shall get a very different colour into them when we've been down here a few days," he said, smiling.

They arrived at the boarding-house and dismissed the cab. An untidy maid opened the door and, when Philip asked if they had rooms, said she would inquire. She fetched her mistress. A middle-aged woman, stout and business-like, came downstairs, gave them the scrutinising glance of her profession, and asked what accommodation they required.

"Two single rooms, and if you've got such a thing we'd rather like a cot in one of them."

"I'm afraid I haven't got that. I've got one nice large double room, and I could let you have a cot."

"I don't think that would do," said Philip.

"I could give you another room next week. Brighton's very full just now, and people have to take what they can get."

"If it were only for a few days, Philip, I think we might be able to manage," said Mildred.

"I think two rooms would be more convenient. Can you recommend any other place where they take boarders?"

"I can, but I don't suppose they'd have room any more than I have."

"Perhaps you wouldn't mind giving me the address."

The house the stout woman suggested was in the next street, and they walked towards it. Philip could walk quite well, though he had to lean on a stick, and he was rather weak. Mildred carried the baby. They went for a little in silence, and then he saw she was crying. It annoyed him, and he took no notice, but she forced his attention.

"Lend me a hanky, will you? I can't get at mine with baby," she said in a voice strangled with sobs, turning her head away from him.

He gave her his handkerchief, but said nothing. She dried her eyes, and as he did not speak, went on.

"I might be poisonous."

"Please don't make a scene in the street," he said.

"It'll look so funny insisting on separate rooms like that. What'll they think of us?"

"If they knew the circumstances I imagine they'd think us surprisingly moral," said Philip.

She gave him a sidelong glance.

"You're not going to give it away that we're not married?" she asked quickly.

"No."

"Why won't you live with me as if we were married then?"

"My dear, I can't explain. I don't want to humiliate you, but I simply can't. I daresay it's very silly and unreasonable, but it's stronger than I am. I loved you so much that now . . ." he broke off. "After all, there's no accounting for that sort of thing."

"A fat lot you must have loved me!" she exclaimed.

The boarding-house to which they had been directed was kept by a bustling maiden lady, with shrewd eyes and voluble speech. They could have one double room for twenty-five shillings a week each, and five shillings extra for the baby, or they could have two single rooms for a pound a week more.

"I have to charge that much more," the woman explained apologetically, "because if I'm pushed to it I can put two beds even in the single rooms."

"I daresay that won't ruin us. What do you think, Mildred?"

"Oh, I don't mind. Anything's good enough for me," she answered.

Philip passed off her sulky reply with a laugh, and, the landlady having arranged to send for their luggage, they sat down to rest themselves. Philip's foot was hurting him a little, and he was glad to put it up on a chair.

"I suppose you don't mind my sitting in the same room with you," said Mildred aggressively.

"Don't let's quarrel, Mildred," he said gently.

"I didn't know you was so well off you could afford to throw away a pound a week."

"Don't be angry with me. I assure you it's the only way we can live together at all."

"I suppose you despise me, that's it."

"Of course I don't. Why should I?"

"It's so unnatural."

"Is it? You're not in love with me, are you?"

"Me? Who d'you take me for?"

"It's not as if you were a very passionate woman, you're not that."

"It's so humiliating," she said sulkily.

"Oh, I wouldn't fuss about that if I were you."

There were about a dozen people in the boarding-house. They ate in a narrow, dark room at a long table, at the head of which the landlady sat and carved. The food was bad. The landlady called it French cooking, by which she meant that the poor quality of the materials was disguised by ill-made sauces: plaice masqueraded as sole and New Zealand mutton as lamb. The kitchen was small and inconvenient, so that everything was served up lukewarm. The people were dull and pretentious; old ladies with elderly maiden daughters; funny old bachelors with mincing ways; pale-faced, middle-aged clerks with wives, who talked of their married daughters and their sons who were in a very good position in the Colonies. At table they discussed Miss Corelli's latest novel; some of them liked Lord Leighton better than Mr. Alma-Tadema, and some of them liked Mr. Alma-Tadema better than Lord Leighton. Mildred soon told the ladies of her romantic marriage with Philip; and he found himself an object of interest because his family, county people in a very good position, had cut him off with a shilling because he married while he was only a stoodent; and Mildred's father, who had a large place down Devonshire way, wouldn't do anything for them because she had married Philip. That was why they had come to a boarding-house and had not a nurse for the baby; but they had to have two rooms because they were both used to a good deal of accommodation and they didn't

care to be cramped. The other visitors also had explanations of their presence: one of the single gentlemen generally went to the Metropole for his holiday, but he liked cheerful company and you couldn't get that at one of those expensive hotels; and the old lady with the middle-aged daughter was having her beautiful house in London done up and she said to her daughter: "Gwennie, my dear, we must have a cheap holiday this year," and so they had come there, though of course it wasn't at all the kind of thing they were used to. Mildred found them all very superior, and she hated a lot of common, rough people. She liked gentlemen to be gentlemen in every sense of the word.

"When people are gentlemen and ladies," she said, "I like them to be gentlemen and ladies."

The remark seemed cryptic to Philip, but when he heard her say it two or three times to different persons, and found that it aroused hearty agreement, he came to the conclusion that it was only obscure to his own intelligence. It was the first time that Philip and Mildred had been thrown entirely together. In London he did not see her all day, and when he came home the household affairs, the baby, the neighbours, gave them something to talk about till he settled down to work. Now he spent the whole day with her. After breakfast they went down to the beach; the morning went easily enough with a bathe and a stroll along the front; the evening, which they spent on the pier, having put the baby to bed, was tolerable, for there was music to listen to and a constant stream of people to look at; (Philip amused himself by imagining who they were and weaving little stories about them; he had got into the habit of answering Mildred's remarks with his mouth only so that his thoughts remained undisturbed;) but the afternoons were long and dreary. They sat on the beach. Mildred said they must get all the benefit they could out of Doctor Brighton, and he could not read because Mildred made observations frequently about things in general. If he paid no attention she complained.

"Oh, leave that silly old book alone. It can't be good for you always reading. You'll addle your brain, that's what you'll do, Philip."

"Oh, rot!" he answered.

"Besides, it's so unsociable."

He discovered that it was difficult to talk to her. She had not even the power of attending to what she was herself saying, so that a dog running in front of her or the passing of a man in a loud blazer would call forth a remark and then she would forget what she had been speaking of. She had a bad memory for names, and

it irritated her not to be able to think of them, so that she would pause in the middle of some story to rack her brains. Sometimes she had to give it up, but it often occurred to her afterwards, and when Philip was talking of something she would interrupt him.

"Collins, that was it. I knew it would come back to me some time. Collins, that's the name I couldn't remember."

It exasperated him because it showed that she was not listening to anything he said, and yet, if he was silent, she reproached him for sulkiness. Her mind was of an order that could not deal for five minutes with the abstract, and when Philip gave way to his taste for generalising she very quickly showed that she was bored. Mildred dreamt a great deal, and she had an accurate memory for her dreams, which she would relate every day with prolixity.

One morning he received a long letter from Thorpe Athelny. He was taking his holiday in the theatrical way, in which there was much sound sense, which characterised him. He had done the same thing for ten years. He took his whole family to a hop-field in Kent, not far from Mrs. Athelny's home, and they spent three weeks hopping. It kept them in the open air, earned them money, much to Mrs. Athelny's satisfaction, and renewed their contact with mother earth. It was upon this that Athelny laid stress. The sojourn in the fields gave them a new strength; it was like a magic ceremony, by which they renewed their youth and the power of their limbs and the sweetness of the spirit: Philip had heard him say many fantastic, rhetorical, and picturesque things on the subject. Now Athelny invited him to come over for a day, he had certain meditations on Shakespeare and the musical glasses which he desired to impart, and the children were clamouring for a sight of Uncle Philip. Philip read the letter again in the afternoon when he was sitting with Mildred on the beach. He thought of Mrs. Athelny, cheerful mother of many children, with her kindly hospitality and her good humour; of Sally, grave for her years, with funny little maternal ways and an air of authority, with her long plait of fair hair and her broad forehead; and then in a bunch of all the others, merry, boisterous, healthy, and handsome. His heart went out to them. There was one quality which they had that he did not remember to have noticed in people before, and that was goodness. It had not occurred to him till now, but it was evidently the beauty of their goodness which attracted him. In theory he did not believe in it: if morality were no more than a matter of convenience good and evil had no meaning. He did not like to be illogical, but here was simple goodness, natural and without effort, and he thought it beautiful. Meditating, he slowly tore the

letter into little pieces; he did not see how he could go without Mildred, and he did not want to go with her.

It was very hot, the sky was cloudless, and they had been driven to a shady corner. The baby was gravely playing with stones on the beach, and now and then she crawled up to Philip and gave him one to hold, then took it away again and placed it carefully down. She was playing a mysterious and complicated game known only to herself. Mildred was asleep. She lay with her head thrown back and her mouth slightly open; her legs were stretched out, and her boots protruded from her petticoats in a grotesque fashion. His eyes had been resting on her vaguely, but now he looked at her with peculiar attention. He remembered how passionately he had loved her, and he wondered why now he was entirely indifferent to her. The change in him filled him with dull pain. It seemed to him that all he had suffered had been sheer waste. The touch of her hand had filled him with ecstasy; he had desired to enter into her soul so that he could share every thought with her and every feeling; he had suffered acutely because, when silence had fallen between them, a remark of hers showed how far their thoughts had travelled apart, and he had rebelled against the unsurmountable wall which seemed to divide every personality from every other. He found it strangely tragic that he had loved her so madly and now loved her not at all. Sometimes he hated her. She was incapable of learning, and the experience of life had taught her nothing. She was as unmannerly as she had always been. It revolted Philip to hear the insolence with which she treated the hard-worked servant at the boarding-house.

Presently he considered his own plans. At the end of his fourth year he would be able to take his examination in midwifery, and a year more would see him qualified. Then he might manage a journey to Spain. He wanted to see the pictures which he knew only from photographs; he felt deeply that El Greco held a secret of peculiar moment to him; and he fancied that in Toledo he would surely find it out. He did not wish to do things grandly, and on a hundred pounds he might live for six months in Spain: if Macalister put him on to another good thing he could make that easily. His heart warmed at the thought of those old beautiful cities, and the tawny plains of Castile. He was convinced that more might be got out of life than offered itself at present, and he thought that in Spain he could live with greater intensity: it might be possible to practise in one of those old cities, there were a good many foreigners, passing or resident, and he should be able to pick up a living. But that would be much later; first he must

get one or two hospital appointments; they gave experience and made it easy to get jobs afterwards. He wished to get a berth as ship's doctor on one of the large tramps that took things leisurely enough for a man to see something of the places at which they stopped. He wanted to go to the East; and his fancy was rich with pictures of Bangkok and Shanghai, and the ports of Japan: he pictured to himself palm-trees and skies blue and hot, dark-skinned people, pagodas; the scents of the Orient intoxicated his nostrils. His heart beat with passionate desire for the beauty and the strangeness of the world.

Mildred awoke.

"I do believe I've been asleep," she said. "Now then, you naughty girl, what have you been doing to yourself? Her dress was clean yesterday and just look at it now, Philip."

XCV

When they returned to London Philip began his dressing in the surgical wards. He was not so much interested in surgery as in medicine, which, a more empirical science, offered greater scope to the imagination. The work was a little harder than the corresponding work on the medical side. There was a lecture from nine till ten, when he went into the wards; there wounds had to be dressed, stitches taken out, bandages renewed: Philip prided himself a little on his skill in bandaging, and it amused him to wring a word of approval from a nurse. On certain afternoons in the week there were operations; and he stood in the well of the theatre, in a white jacket, ready to hand the operating surgeon any instrument he wanted or to sponge the blood away so that he could see what he was about. When some rare operation was to be performed the theatre would fill up, but generally there were not more than half a dozen students present, and then the proceedings had a cosiness which Philip enjoyed. At that time the world at large seemed to have a passion for appendicitis, and a good many cases came to the operating theatre for this complaint: the surgeon for whom Philip dressed was in friendly rivalry with a colleague as to which could remove an appendix in the shortest time and with the smallest incision.

In due course Philip was put on accident duty. The dressers took this in turn; it lasted three days, during which they lived in hospital and ate their meals in the common room; they had a room on the ground floor near the casualty ward, with a bed that shut up during the day into a cupboard. The dresser on duty had to be at hand day and night to see to any casualty that came in. You were on the move all the time, and not more than an hour or two passed during the night without the clanging of the bell just above your head which made you leap out of bed instinctively. Saturday night was of course the busiest time and the closing of the public-houses the busiest hour. Men would be brought in by the police dead drunk and it would be necessary to administer a stomach-pump; women, rather the worse for liquor themselves, would come in with a wound on the head or a bleeding nose which their husbands had given them: some would vow to have the law on him, and others, ashamed, would declare that it had been an acci-

dent. What the dresser could manage himself he did, but if there was anything important he sent for the house-surgeon: he did this with care, since the house-surgeon was not vastly pleased to be dragged down five flights of stairs for nothing. The cases ranged from a cut finger to a cut throat. Boys came in with hands mangled by some machine, men were brought who had been knocked down by a cab, and children who had broken a limb while playing: now and then attempted suicides were carried in by the police: Philip saw a ghastly, wild-eyed man with a great gash from ear to ear, and he was in the ward for weeks afterwards in charge of a constable, silent, angry because he was alive, and sullen; he made no secret of the fact that he would try again to kill himself as soon as he was released. The wards were crowded, and the house-surgeon was faced with a dilemma when patients were brought in by the police: if they were sent on to the station and died there disagreeable things were said in the papers; and it was very difficult sometimes to tell if a man was dying or drunk. Philip did not go to bed till he was tired out, so that he should not have the bother of getting up again in an hour; and he sat in the casualty ward talking in the intervals of work with the night-nurse. She was a gray-haired woman of masculine appearance, who had been night-nurse in the casualty department for twenty years. She liked the work because she was her own mistress and had no sister to bother her. Her movements were slow, but she was immensely capable and she never failed in an emergency. The dressers, often inexperienced or nervous, found her a tower of strength. She had seen thousands of them, and they made no impression upon her: she always called them Mr. Brown; and when they expostulated and told her their real names, she merely nodded and went on calling them Mr. Brown. It interested Philip to sit with her in the bare room, with its two horse-hair couches and the flaring gas, and listen to her. She had long ceased to look upon the people who came in as human beings; they were drunks, or broken arms, or cut throats. She took the vice and misery and cruelty of the world as a matter of course; she found nothing to praise or blame in human actions: she accepted. She had a certain grim humour.

"I remember one suicide," she said to Philip, "who threw himself into the Thames. They fished him out and brought him here, and ten days later he developed typhoid fever from swallowing Thames water."

"Did he die?"

"Yes, he died all right. I could never make up my mind if it was suicide or not. . . . They're a funny lot, suicides. I remember

one man who couldn't get any work to do and his wife died, so he pawned his clothes and bought a revolver; but he made a mess of it, he only shot out an eye and he got all right. And then, if you please, with an eye gone and a piece of his face blown away, he came to the conclusion that the world wasn't such a bad place after all, and he lived happily ever afterwards. Thing I've always noticed, people don't commit suicide for love, as you'd expect, that's just a fancy of novelists; they commit suicide because they haven't got any money. I wonder why that is."

"I suppose money's more important than love," suggested Philip.

Money was in any case occupying Philip's thoughts a good deal just then. He discovered the little truth there was in the airy saying which himself had repeated, that two could live as cheaply as one, and his expenses were beginning to worry him. Mildred was not a good manager, and it cost them as much to live as if they had eaten in restaurants; the child needed clothes, and Mildred boots, an umbrella, and other small things which it was impossible for her to do without. When they returned from Brighton she had announced her intention of getting a job, but she took no definite steps, and presently a bad cold laid her up for a fortnight. When she was well she answered one or two advertisements, but nothing came of it: either she arrived too late and the vacant place was filled, or the work was more than she felt strong enough to do. Once she got an offer, but the wages were only fourteen shillings a week, and she thought she was worth more than that.

"It's no good letting oneself be put upon," she remarked. "People don't respect you if you let yourself go too cheap."

"I don't think fourteen shillings is so bad," answered Philip, drily.

He could not help thinking how useful it would be towards the expenses of the household, and Mildred was already beginning to hint that she did not get a place because she had not got a decent dress to interview employers in. He gave her the dress, and she made one or two more attempts, but Philip came to the conclusion that they were not serious. She did not want to work. The only way he knew to make money was on the Stock Exchange, and he was very anxious to repeat the lucky experiment of the summer; but war had broken out with the Transvaal and nothing was doing in South Africans. Macalister told him that Redvers Buller would march into Pretoria in a month and then everything would boom. The only thing was to wait patiently. What they wanted was a British reverse to knock things down a bit, and then it might be worth while buying. Philip began reading assiduously the 'city

chat' of his favourite newspaper. He was worried and irritable. Once or twice he spoke sharply to Mildred, and since she was neither tactful nor patient she answered with temper, and they quarrelled. Philip always expressed his regret for what he had said, but Mildred had not a forgiving nature, and she would sulk for a couple of days. She got on his nerves in all sorts of ways; by the manner in which she ate, and by the untidiness which made her leave articles of clothing about their sitting-room: Philip was excited by the war and devoured the papers, morning and evening; but she took no interest in anything that happened. She had made the acquaintance of two or three people who lived in the street, and one of them had asked if she would like the curate to call on her. She wore a wedding-ring and called herself Mrs. Carey. On Philip's walls were two or three of the drawings which he had made in Paris, nudes, two of women and one of Miguel Ajuria, standing very square on his feet, with clenched fists. Philip kept them because they were the best things he had done, and they reminded him of happy days. Mildred had long looked at them with disfavour.

"I wish you'd take those drawings down, Philip," she said to him at last. "Mrs. Foreman, of number thirteen, came in yesterday afternoon, and I didn't know which way to look. I saw her staring at them."

"What's the matter with them?"

"They're indecent. Disgusting, that's what I call it, to have drawings of naked people about. And it isn't nice for baby either. She's beginning to notice things now."

"How can you be so vulgar?"

"Vulgar? Modest, I call it. I've never said anything, but d'you think I like having to look at those naked people all day long."

"Have you no sense of humour at all, Mildred?" he asked frigidly.

"I don't know what sense of humour's got to do with it. I've got a good mind to take them down myself. If you want to know what I think about them, I think they're disgusting."

"I don't want to know what you think about them, and I forbid you to touch them."

When Mildred was cross with him she punished him through the baby. The little girl was as fond of Philip as he was of her, and it was her great pleasure every morning to crawl into his room, (she was getting on for two now and could walk pretty well,) and be

taken up into his bed. When Mildred stopped this the poor child would cry bitterly. To Philip's remonstrances she replied:

"I don't want her to get into habits."

And if then he said anything more she said:

"It's nothing to do with you what I do with my child. To hear you talk one would think you was her father. I'm her mother, and I ought to know what's good for her, oughtn't I?"

Philip was exasperated by Mildred's stupidity; but he was so indifferent to her now that it was only at times she made him angry. He grew used to having her about. Christmas came, and with it a couple of days holiday for Philip. He brought some holly in and decorated the flat, and on Christmas Day he gave small presents to Mildred and the baby. There were only two of them so they could not have a turkey, but Mildred roasted a chicken and boiled a Christmas pudding which she had bought at a local grocer's. They stood themselves a bottle of wine. When they had dined Philip sat in his arm-chair by the fire, smoking his pipe; and the unaccustomed wine had made him forget for a while the anxiety about money which was so constantly with him. He felt happy and comfortable. Presently Mildred came in to tell him that the baby wanted him to kiss her good-night, and with a smile he went into Mildred's bed-room. Then, telling the child to go to sleep, he turned down the gas and, leaving the door open in case she cried, went back into the sitting-room.

"Where are you going to sit?" he asked Mildred.

"You sit in your chair. I'm going to sit on the floor."

When he sat down she settled herself in front of the fire and leaned against his knees. He could not help remembering that this was how they had sat together in her rooms in the Vauxhall Bridge Road, but the positions had been reversed; it was he who had sat on the floor and leaned his head against her knee. How passionately he had loved her then! Now he felt for her a tenderness he had not known for a long time. He seemed still to feel twined round his neck the baby's soft little arms.

"Are you comfy?" he asked.

She looked up at him, gave a slight smile, and nodded. They gazed into the fire dreamily, without speaking to one another. At last she turned round and stared at him curiously.

"D'you know that you haven't kissed me once since I came here?" she said suddenly.

"D'you want me to?" he smiled.

"I suppose you don't care for me in that way any more?"

"I'm very fond of you."

"You're much fonder of baby."

He did not answer, and she laid her cheek against his hand.

"You're not angry with me any more?" she asked presently with her eyes cast down.

"Why on earth should I be?"

"I've never cared for you as I do now. It's only since I passed through the fire that I've learnt to love you."

It chilled Philip to hear her make use of the sort of phrase she read in the penny novelettes which she devoured. Then he wondered whether what she said had any meaning for her: perhaps she knew no other way to express her genuine feelings than the stilted language of *The Family Herald.*

"It seems so funny our living together like this."

He did not reply for quite a long time, and silence fell upon them again; but at last he spoke and seemed conscious of no interval.

"You mustn't be angry with me. One can't help these things. I remember that I thought you wicked and cruel because you did this, that, and the other; but it was very silly of me. You didn't love me, and it was absurd to blame you for that. I thought I could make you love me, but I know now that was impossible. I don't know what it is that makes someone love you, but whatever it is, it's the only thing that matters, and if it isn't there you won't create it by kindness, or generosity, or anything of that sort."

"I should have thought if you'd loved me really you'd have loved me still."

"I should have thought so too. I remember how I used to think that it would last for ever, I felt I would rather die than be without you, and I used to long for the time when you would be faded and wrinkled so that nobody cared for you any more and I should have you all to myself."

She did not answer, and presently she got up and said she was going to bed. She gave a timid little smile.

"It's Christmas Day, Philip, won't you kiss me good-night?"

He gave a laugh, blushed slightly, and kissed her. She went to her bed-room and he began to read.

XCVI

The climax came two or three weeks later. Mildred was driven by Philip's behaviour to a pitch of strange exasperation. There were many different emotions in her soul, and she passed from mood to mood with facility. She spent a great deal of time alone and brooded over her position. She did not put all her feelings into words, she did not even know what they were, but certain things stood out in her mind, and she thought of them over and over again. She had never understood Philip, nor had very much liked him; but she was pleased to have him about her because she thought he was a gentleman. She was impressed because his father had been a doctor and his uncle was a clergyman. She despised him a little because she had made such a fool of him, and at the same time was never quite comfortable in his presence; she could not let herself go, and she felt that he was criticising her manners.

When she first came to live in the little rooms in Kennington she was tired out and ashamed. She was glad to be left alone. It was a comfort to think that there was no rent to pay; she need not go out in all weathers, and she could lie quietly in bed if she did not feel well. She had hated the life she led. It was horrible to have to be affable and subservient; and even now when it crossed her mind she cried with pity for herself as she thought of the roughness of men and their brutal language. But it crossed her mind very seldom. She was grateful to Philip for coming to her rescue, and when she remembered how honestly he had loved her and how badly she had treated him, she felt a pang of remorse. It was easy to make it up to him. It meant very little to her. She was surprised when he refused her suggestion, but she shrugged her shoulders: let him put on airs if he liked, she did not care, he would be anxious enough in a little while, and then it would be her turn to refuse; if he thought it was any deprivation to her he was very much mistaken. She had no doubt of her power over him. He was peculiar, but she knew him through and through. He had so often quarrelled with her and sworn he would never see her again, and then in a little while he had come on his knees begging to be forgiven. It gave her a thrill to think how he had cringed before her. He would have been glad to lie down on the ground for her to walk on him. She had seen him cry. She knew exactly how to treat him, pay no attention to him, just pretend you didn't notice his

tempers, leave him severely alone, and in a little while he was sure to grovel. She laughed a little to herself, good-humouredly, when she thought how he had come and eaten dirt before her. She had had her fling now. She knew what men were and did not want to have anything more to do with them. She was quite ready to settle down with Philip. When all was said, he was a gentleman in every sense of the word, and that was something not to be sneezed at, wasn't it? Anyhow she was in no hurry, and she was not going to take the first step. She was glad to see how fond he was growing of the baby, though it tickled her a good deal; it was comic that he should set so much store on another man's child. He *was* peculiar and no mistake.

But one or two things surprised her. She had been used to his subservience: he was only too glad to do anything for her in the old days, she was accustomed to see him cast down by a cross word and in ecstasy at a kind one; he was different now, and she said to herself that he had not improved in the last year. It never struck her for a moment that there could be any change in his feelings, and she thought it was only acting when he paid no heed to her bad temper. He wanted to read sometimes and told her to stop talking: she did not know whether to flare up or to sulk, and was so puzzled that she did neither. Then came the conversation in which he told her that he intended their relations to be platonic, and, remembering an incident of their common past, it occurred to her that he dreaded the possibility of her being pregnant. She took pains to reassure him. It made no difference. She was the sort of woman who was unable to realise that a man might not have her own obsession with sex; her relations with men had been purely on those lines; and she could not understand that they ever had other interests. The thought struck her that Philip was in love with somebody else, and she watched him, suspecting nurses at the hospital or people he met out; but artful questions led her to the conclusion that there was no one dangerous in the Athelny household; and it forced itself upon her also that Philip, like most medical students, was unconscious of the sex of the nurses with whom his work threw him in contact. They were associated in his mind with a faint odour of iodoform. Philip received no letters, and there was no girl's photograph among his belongings. If he was in love with someone, he was very clever at hiding it; and he answered all Mildred's questions with frankness and apparently without suspicion that there was any motive in them.

"I don't believe he's in love with anybody else," she said to herself at last.

It was a relief, for in that case he was certainly still in love with her; but it made his behaviour very puzzling. If he was going to treat her like that why did he ask her to come and live at the flat? It was unnatural. Mildred was not a woman who conceived the possibility of compassion, generosity, or kindness. Her only conclusion was that Philip was queer. She took it into her head that the reasons for his conduct were chivalrous; and, her imagination filled with the extravagances of cheap fiction, she pictured to herself all sorts of romantic explanations for his delicacy. Her fancy ran riot with bitter misunderstandings, purifications by fire, snow-white souls, and death in the cruel cold of a Christmas night. She made up her mind that when they went to Brighton she would put an end to all his nonsense; they would be alone there, everyone would think them husband and wife, and there would be the pier and the band. When she found that nothing would induce Philip to share the same room with her, when he spoke to her about it with a tone in his voice she had never heard before, she suddenly realised that he did not want her. She was astounded. She remembered all he had said in the past and how desperately he had loved her. She felt humiliated and angry, but she had a sort of native insolence which carried her through. He needn't think she was in love with him, because she wasn't. She hated him sometimes, and she longed to humble him; but she found herself singularly powerless; she did not know which way to handle him. She began to be a little nervous with him. Once or twice she cried. Once or twice she set herself to be particularly nice to him; but when she took his arm while they walked along the front at night he made some excuse in a while to release himself, as though it were unpleasant for him to be touched by her. She could not make it out. The only hold she had over him was through the baby, of whom he seemed to grow fonder and fonder: she could make him white with anger by giving the child a slap or a push; and the only time the old, tender smile came back into his eyes was when she stood with the baby in her arms. She noticed it when she was being photographed like that by a man on the beach, and afterwards she often stood in the same way for Philip to look at her.

When they got back to London Mildred began looking for the work she had asserted was so easy to find; she wanted now to be independent of Philip; and she thought of the satisfaction with which she would announce to him that she was going into rooms and would take the child with her. But her heart failed her when she came into closer contact with the possibility. She had grown unused to the long hours, she did not want to be at the beck and call of a

manageress, and her dignity revolted at the thought of wearing once more a uniform. She had made out to such of the neighbours as she knew that they were comfortably off: it would be a come-down if they heard that she had to go out and work. Her natural indolence asserted itself. She did not want to leave Philip, and so long as he was willing to provide for her, she did not see why she should. There was no money to throw away, but she got her board and lodging, and he might get better off. His uncle was an old man and might die any day, he would come into a little then, and even as things were, it was better than slaving from morning till night for a few shillings a week. Her efforts relaxed; she kept on reading the advertisement columns of the daily paper merely to show that she wanted to do something if anything that was worth her while presented itself. But panic seized her, and she was afraid that Philip would grow tired of supporting her. She had no hold over him at all now, and she fancied that he only allowed her to stay there because he was fond of the baby. She brooded over it all, and she thought to herself angrily that she would make him pay for all this some day. She could not reconcile herself to the fact that he no longer cared for her. She would make him. She suffered from pique, and sometimes in a curious fashion she desired Philip. He was so cold now that it exasperated her. She thought of him in that way incessantly. She thought that he was treating her very badly, and she did not know what she had done to deserve it. She kept on saying to herself that it was unnatural they should live like that. Then she thought that if things were different and she were going to have a baby, he would be sure to marry her. He was funny, but he was a gentleman in every sense of the word, no one could deny that. At last it became an obsession with her, and she made up her mind to force a change in their relations. He never even kissed her now, and she wanted him to: she remembered how ardently he had been used to press her lips. It gave her a curious feeling to think of it. She often looked at his mouth.

One evening, at the beginning of February, Philip told her that he was dining with Lawson, who was giving a party in his studio to celebrate his birthday; and he would not be in till late; Lawson had bought a couple of bottles of the punch they favoured from the tavern in Beak Street, and they proposed to have a merry evening. Mildred asked if there were going to be women there, but Philip told her there were not; only men had been invited; and they were just going to sit and talk and smoke: Mildred did not think it sounded very amusing; if she were a painter she would have half a dozen models about. She went to bed, but could not

sleep, and presently an idea struck her; she got up and fixed the catch on the wicket at the landing, so that Philip could not get in. He came back about one, and she heard him curse when he found that the wicket was closed. She got out of bed and opened.

"Why on earth did you shut yourself in? I'm sorry I've dragged you out of bed."

"I left it open on purpose, I can't think how it came to be shut."

"Hurry up and get back to bed, or you'll catch cold."

He walked into the sitting-room and turned up the gas. She followed him in. She went up to the fire.

"I want to warm my feet a bit. They're like ice."

He sat down and began to take off his boots. His eyes were shining and his cheeks were flushed. She thought he had been drinking.

"Have you been enjoying yourself?" she asked, with a smile.

"Yes, I've had a ripping time."

Philip was quite sober, but he had been talking and laughing, and he was excited still. An evening of that sort reminded him of the old days in Paris. He was in high spirits. He took his pipe out of his pocket and filled it.

"Aren't you going to bed?" she asked.

"Not yet, I'm not a bit sleepy. Lawson was in great form. He talked sixteen to the dozen from the moment I got there till the moment I left."

"What did you talk about?"

"Heaven knows! Of every subject under the sun. You should have seen us all shouting at the tops of our voices and nobody listening."

Philip laughed with pleasure at the recollection, and Mildred laughed too. She was pretty sure he had drunk more than was good for him. That was exactly what she had expected. She knew men.

"Can I sit down?" she said.

Before he could answer she settled herself on his knees.

"If you're not going to bed you'd better go and put on a dressing-gown."

"Oh, I'm all right as I am." Then putting her arms round his neck, she placed her face against his and said: "Why are you so horrid to me, Phil?"

He tried to get up, but she would not let him.

"I do love you, Philip," she said.

"Don't talk damned rot."

"It isn't, it's true. I can't live without you. I want you."

He released himself from her arms.

"Please get up. You're making a fool of yourself and you're making me feel a perfect idiot."

"I love you, Philip. I want to make up for all the harm I did you. I can't go on like this, it's not in human nature."

He slipped out of the chair and left her in it.

"I'm very sorry, but it's too late."

She gave a heart-rending sob.

"But why? How can you be so cruel?"

"I suppose it's because I loved you too much. I wore the passion out. The thought of anything of that sort horrifies me. I can't look at you now without thinking of Emil and Griffiths. One can't help those things, I suppose it's just nerves."

She seized his hand and covered it with kisses.

"Don't," he cried.

She sank back into the chair.

"I can't go on like this. If you won't love me, I'd rather go away."

"Don't be foolish, you haven't anywhere to go. You can stay here as long as you like, but it must be on the definite understanding that we're friends and nothing more."

Then she dropped suddenly the vehemence of passion and gave a soft, insinuating laugh. She sidled up to Philip and put her arms round him. She made her voice low and wheedling.

"Don't be such an old silly. I believe you're nervous. You don't know how nice I can be."

She put her face against his and rubbed his cheek with hers. To Philip her smile was an abominable leer, and the suggestive glitter of her eyes filled him with horror. He drew back instinctively.

"I won't," he said.

But she would not let him go. She sought his mouth with her lips. He took her hands and tore them roughly apart and pushed her away.

"You disgust me," he said.

"Me?"

She steadied herself with one hand on the chimney-piece. She looked at him for an instant, and two red spots suddenly appeared on her cheeks. She gave a shrill, angry laugh.

"I disgust *you*."

She paused and drew in her breath sharply. Then she burst into a furious torrent of abuse. She shouted at the top of her voice. She called him every foul name she could think of. She used language so obscene that Philip was astounded; she was always so anxious to be refined, so shocked by coarseness, that it had never

occurred to him that she knew the words she used now. She came up to him and thrust her face in his. It was distorted with passion, and in her tumultuous speech the spittle dribbled over her lips.

"I never cared for you, not once, I was making a fool of you always, you bored me, you bored me stiff, and I hated you, I would never have let you touch me only for the money, and it used to make me sick when I had to let you kiss me. We laughed at you, Griffiths and me, we laughed because you was such a mug. A mug! A mug!"

Then she burst again into abominable invective. She accused him of every mean fault; she said he was stingy, she said he was dull, she said he was vain, selfish; she cast virulent ridicule on everything upon which he was most sensitive. And at last she turned to go. She kept on, with hysterical violence, shouting at him an opprobrious, filthy epithet. She seized the handle of the door and flung it open. Then she turned round and hurled at him the injury which she knew was the only one that really touched him. She threw into the word all the malice and all the venom of which she was capable. She flung it at him as though it were a blow.

"Cripple!"

XCVII

PHILIP awoke with a start next morning, conscious that it was late, and looking at his watch found it was nine o'clock. He jumped out of bed and went into the kitchen to get himself some hot water to shave with. There was no sign of Mildred, and the things which she had used for her supper the night before still lay in the sink unwashed. He knocked at her door.

"Wake up, Mildred. It's awfully late."

She did not answer, even after a second louder knocking, and he concluded that she was sulking. He was in too great a hurry to bother about that. He put some water on to boil and jumped into his bath which was always poured out the night before in order to take the chill off. He presumed that Mildred would cook his breakfast while he was dressing and leave it in the sitting-room. She had done that two or three times when she was out of temper. But he heard no sound of her moving, and realised that if he wanted anything to eat he would have to get it himself. He was irritated that she should play him such a trick on a morning when he had overslept himself. There was still no sign of her when he was ready, but he heard her moving about her room. She was evidently getting up. He made himself some tea and cut himself a couple of pieces of bread and butter, which he ate while he was putting on his boots, then bolted downstairs and along the street into the main road to catch his tram. While his eyes sought out the newspaper shops to see the war news on the placards, he thought of the scene of the night before: now that it was over and he had slept on it, he could not help thinking it grotesque; he supposed he had been ridiculous, but he was not master of his feelings; at the time they had been overwhelming. He was angry with Mildred because she had forced him into that absurd position, and then with renewed astonishment he thought of her outburst and the filthy language she had used. He could not help flushing when he remembered her final jibe; but he shrugged his shoulders contemptuously. He had long known that when his fellows were angry with him they never failed to taunt him with his deformity. He had seen men at the hospital imitate his walk, not before him as they used at school, but when they thought he was not looking. He knew now that they did it from no wilful unkindness, but be-

cause man is naturally an imitative animal, and because it was an easy way to make people laugh: he knew it, but he could never resign himself to it.

He was glad to throw himself into his work. The ward seemed pleasant and friendly when he entered it. The sister greeted him with a quick, business-like smile.

"You're very late, Mr. Carey."

"I was out on the loose last night."

"You look it."

"Thank you."

Laughing, he went to the first of his cases, a boy with tuberculous ulcers, and removed his bandages. The boy was pleased to see him, and Philip chaffed him as he put a clean dressing on the wound. Philip was a favourite with the patients; he treated them good-humouredly; and he had gentle, sensitive hands which did not hurt them: some of the dressers were a little rough and happy-go-lucky in their methods. He lunched with his friends in the club-room, a frugal meal consisting of a scone and butter, with a cup of cocoa, and they talked of the war. Several men were going out, but the authorities were particular and refused everyone who had not had a hospital appointment. Someone suggested that, if the war went on, in a while they would be glad to take anyone who was qualified; but the general opinion was that it would be over in a month. Now that Roberts was there things would get all right in no time. This was Macalister's opinion too, and he had told Philip that they must watch their chance and buy just before peace was declared. There would be a boom then, and they might all make a bit of money. Philip had left with Macalister instructions to buy him stock whenever the opportunity presented itself. His appetite had been whetted by the thirty pounds he had made in the summer, and he wanted now to make a couple of hundred.

He finished his day's work and got on a tram to go back to Kennington. He wondered how Mildred would behave that evening. It was a nuisance to think that she would probably be surly and refuse to answer his questions. It was a warm evening for the time of year, and even in those gray streets of South London there was the languor of February; nature is restless then after the long winter months, growing things awake from their sleep, and there is a rustle in the earth, a forerunner of spring, as it resumes its eternal activities. Philip would have liked to drive on further, it was distasteful to him to go back to his rooms, and he wanted the air; but the desire to see the child clutched suddenly at his heart-strings, and he smiled to himself as he thought

of her toddling towards him with a crow of delight. He was surprised, when he reached the house and looked up mechanically at the windows, to see that there was no light. He went upstairs and knocked, but got no answer. When Mildred went out she left the key under the mat and he found it there now. He let himself in and going into the sitting-room struck a match. Something had happened, he did not at once know what; he turned the gas on full and lit it; the room was suddenly filled with the glare and he looked round. He gasped. The whole place was wrecked. Everything in it had been wilfully destroyed. Anger seized him, and he rushed into Mildred's room. It was dark and empty. When he had got a light he saw that she had taken away all her things and the baby's; (he had noticed on entering that the go-cart was not in its usual place on the landing, but thought Mildred had taken the baby out;) and all the things on the washing-stand had been broken, a knife had been drawn cross-ways through the seats of the two chairs, the pillow had been slit open, there were large gashes in the sheets and the counterpane, the looking-glass appeared to have been broken with a hammer. Philip was bewildered. He went into his own room, and here too everything was in confusion. The basin and the ewer had been smashed, the looking-glass was in fragments, and the sheets were in ribands. Mildred had made a slit large enough to put her hand into the pillow and had scattered the feathers about the room. She had jabbed a knife into the blankets. On the dressing-table were photographs of Philip's mother, the frames had been smashed and the glass shivered. Philip went into the tiny kitchen. Everything that was breakable was broken, glasses, pudding-basins, plates, dishes.

It took Philip's breath away. Mildred had left no letter, nothing but this ruin to mark her anger, and he could imagine the set face with which she had gone about her work. He went back into the sitting-room and looked about him. He was so astonished that he no longer felt angry. He looked curiously at the kitchen-knife and the coal-hammer, which were lying on the table where she had left them. Then his eye caught a large carving-knife in the fireplace which had been broken. It must have taken her a long time to do so much damage. Lawson's portrait of him had been cut cross-ways and gaped hideously. His own drawings had been ripped in pieces; and the photographs, Manet's *Olympia* and the *Odalisque* of Ingres, the portrait of Philip IV, had been smashed with great blows of the coal-hammer. There were gashes in the table-cloth and in the curtains and in the two arm-chairs. They were quite ruined. On one wall over the table which Philip

used as his desk was the little bit of Persian rug which Cronshaw had given him. Mildred had always hated it.

"If it's a rug it ought to go on the floor," she said, "and it's a dirty stinking bit of stuff, that's all it is."

It made her furious because Philip told her it contained the answer to a great riddle. She thought he was making fun of her. She had drawn the knife right through it three times, it must have required some strength, and it hung now in tatters. Philip had two or three blue and white plates, of no value, but he had bought them one by one for very small sums and liked them for their associations. They littered the floor in fragments. There were long gashes on the backs of his books, and she had taken the trouble to tear pages out of the unbound French ones. The little ornaments on the chimney-piece lay on the hearth in bits. Everything that it had been possible to destroy with a knife or a hammer was destroyed.

The whole of Philip's belongings would not have sold for thirty pounds, but most of them were old friends, and he was a domestic creature, attached to all those odds and ends because they were his; he had been proud of his little home, and on so little money had made it pretty and characteristic. He sank down now in despair. He asked himself how she could have been so cruel. A sudden fear got him on his feet again and into the passage, where stood a cupboard in which he kept his clothes. He opened it and gave a sigh of relief. She had apparently forgotten it and none of his things was touched.

He went back into the sitting-room and, surveying the scene, wondered what to do; he had not the heart to begin trying to set things straight; besides there was no food in the house, and he was hungry. He went out and got himself something to eat. When he came in he was cooler. A little pang seized him as he thought of the child, and he wondered whether she would miss him, at first perhaps, but in a week she would have forgotten him; and he was thankful to be rid of Mildred. He did not think of her with wrath, but with an overwhelming sense of boredom.

"I hope to God I never see her again," he said aloud.

The only thing now was to leave the rooms, and he made up his mind to give notice the next morning. He could not afford to make good the damage done, and he had so little money left that he must find cheaper lodgings still. He would be glad to get out of them. The expense had worried him, and now the recollection of Mildred would be in them always. Philip was impatient and could never rest till he had put in action the plan which he had in mind;

so on the following afternoon he got in a dealer in second-hand furniture who offered him three pounds for all his goods damaged and undamaged; and two days later he moved into the house opposite the hospital in which he had had rooms when first he became a medical student. The landlady was a very decent woman. He took a bed-room at the top, which she let him have for six shillings a week; it was small and shabby and looked on the yard of the house that backed on to it, but he had nothing now except his clothes and a box of books, and he was glad to lodge so cheaply.

XCVIII

And now it happened that the fortunes of Philip Carey, of no consequence to any but himself, were affected by the events through which his country was passing. History was being made, and the process was so significant that it seemed absurd it should touch the life of an obscure medical student. Battle after battle, Magersfontein, Colenso, Spion Kop, lost on the playing fields of Eton, had humiliated the nation and dealt the death-blow to the prestige of the aristocracy and gentry who till then had found no one seriously to oppose their assertion that they possessed a natural instinct of government. The old order was being swept away: history was being made indeed. Then the colossus put forth his strength, and, blundering again, at last blundered into the semblance of victory. Cronje surrendered at Paardeberg, Ladysmith was relieved, and at the beginning of March Lord Roberts marched into Bloemfontein.

It was two or three days after the news of this reached London that Macalister came into the tavern in Beak Street and announced joyfully that things were looking brighter on the Stock Exchange. Peace was in sight, Roberts would march into Pretoria within a few weeks, and shares were going up already. There was bound to be a boom.

"Now's the time to come in," he told Philip. "It's no good waiting till the public gets on to it. It's now or never."

He had inside information. The manager of a mine in South Africa had cabled to the senior partner of his firm that the plant was uninjured. They would start working again as soon as possible. It wasn't a speculation, it was an investment. To show how good a thing the senior partner thought it Macalister told Philip that he had bought five hundred shares for both his sisters; he never put them into anything that wasn't as safe as the Bank of England.

"I'm going to put my shirt on it myself," he said.

The shares were two and an eighth to a quarter. He advised Philip not to be greedy, but to be satisfied with a ten-shilling rise. He was buying three hundred for himself and suggested that Philip should do the same. He would hold them and sell when he thought fit. Philip had great faith in him, partly because he was a Scotsman and therefore by nature cautious, and partly because he had been right before. He jumped at the suggestion.

"I daresay we shall be able to sell before the account," said Macalister, "but if not, I'll arrange to carry them over for you."

It seemed a capital system to Philip. You held on till you got your profit, and you never even had to put your hand in your pocket. He began to watch the Stock Exchange columns of the paper with new interest. Next day everything was up a little, and Macalister wrote to say that he had had to pay two and a quarter for the shares. He said that the market was firm. But in a day or two there was a set-back. The news that came from South Africa was less reassuring, and Philip with anxiety saw that his shares had fallen to two; but Macalister was optimistic, the Boers couldn't hold out much longer, and he was willing to bet a top-hat that Roberts would march into Johannesburg before the middle of April. At the account Philip had to pay out nearly forty pounds. It worried him considerably, but he felt that the only course was to hold on: in his circumstances the loss was too great for him to pocket. For two or three weeks nothing happened; the Boers would not understand that they were beaten and nothing remained for them but to surrender: in fact they had one or two small successes, and Philip's shares fell half a crown more. It became evident that the war was not finished. There was a lot of selling. When Macalister saw Philip he was pessimistic.

"I'm not sure if the best thing wouldn't be to cut the loss. I've been paying out about as much as I want to in differences."

Philip was sick with anxiety. He could not sleep at night; he bolted his breakfast, reduced now to tea and bread and butter, in order to get over to the club reading-room and see the paper; sometimes the news was bad, and sometimes there was no news at all, but when the shares moved it was to go down. He did not know what to do. If he sold now he would lose altogether hard on three hundred and fifty pounds; and that would leave him only eighty pounds to go on with. He wished with all his heart that he had never been such a fool as to dabble on the Stock Exchange, but the only thing was to hold on; something decisive might happen any day and the shares would go up; he did not hope now for a profit, but he wanted to make good his loss. It was his only chance of finishing his course at the hospital. The summer session was beginning in May, and at the end of it he meant to take the examination in midwifery. Then he would only have a year more; he reckoned it out carefully and came to the conclusion that he could manage it, fees and all, on a hundred and fifty pounds; but that was the least it could possibly be done on.

Early in April he went to the tavern in Beak Street anxious to

see Macalister. It eased him a little to discuss the situation with him; and to realise that numerous people beside himself were suffering from loss of money made his own trouble a little less intolerable. But when Philip arrived no one was there but Hayward, and no sooner had Philip seated himself than he said:

"I'm sailing for the Cape on Sunday."

"Are you!" exclaimed Philip.

Hayward was the last person he would have expected to do anything of the kind. At the hospital men were going out now in numbers; the Government was glad to get anyone who was qualified; and others, going out as troopers, wrote home that they had been put on hospital work as soon as it was learned that they were medical students. A wave of patriotic feeling had swept over the country, and volunteers were coming from all ranks of society.

"What are you going as?" asked Philip.

"Oh, in the Dorset Yeomanry. I'm going as a trooper."

Philip had known Hayward for eight years. The youthful intimacy which had come from Philip's enthusiastic admiration for the man who could tell him of art and literature had long since vanished; but habit had taken its place; and when Hayward was in London they saw one another once or twice a week. He still talked about books with a delicate appreciation. Philip was not yet tolerant, and sometimes Hayward's conversation irritated him. He no longer believed implicitly that nothing in the world was of consequence but art. He resented Hayward's contempt for action and success. Philip, stirring his punch, thought of his early friendship and his ardent expectation that Hayward would do great things; it was long since he had lost all such illusions, and he knew now that Hayward would never do anything but talk. He found his three hundred a year more difficult to live on now that he was thirty-five than he had when he was a young man; and his clothes, though still made by a good tailor, were worn a good deal longer than at one time he would have thought possible. He was too stout, and no artful arrangement of his fair hair could conceal the fact that he was bald. His blue eyes were dull and pale. It was not hard to guess that he drank too much.

"What on earth made you think of going out to the Cape?" asked Philip.

"Oh, I don't know, I thought I ought to."

Philip was silent. He felt rather silly. He understood that Hayward was being driven by an uneasiness in his soul which he could not account for. Some power within him made it seem necessary to go and fight for his country. It was strange, since he con-

sidered patriotism no more than a prejudice, and, flattering himself on his cosmopolitanism, he had looked upon England as a place of exile. His countrymen in the mass wounded his susceptibilities. Philip wondered what it was that made people do things which were so contrary to all their theories of life. It would have been reasonable for Hayward to stand aside and watch with a smile while the barbarians slaughtered one another. It looked as though men were puppets in the hands of an unknown force, which drove them to do this and that; and sometimes they used their reason to justify their actions; and when this was impossible they did the actions in despite of reason.

"People are very extraordinary," said Philip. "I should never have expected you to go out as a trooper."

Hayward smiled, slightly embarrassed, and said nothing.

"I was examined yesterday," he remarked at last. "It was worth while undergoing the *gêne* of it to know that one was perfectly fit."

Philip noticed that he still used a French word in an affected way when an English one would have served. But just then Macalister came in.

"I wanted to see you, Carey," he said. "My people don't feel inclined to hold those shares any more, the market's in such an awful state, and they want you to take them up."

Philip's heart sank. He knew that was impossible. It meant that he must accept the loss. His pride made him answer calmly.

"I don't know that I think that's worth while. You'd better sell them."

"It's all very fine to say that, I'm not sure if I can. The market's stagnant, there are no buyers."

"But they're marked down at one and an eighth."

"Oh yes, but that doesn't mean anything. You can't get that for them."

Philip did not say anything for a moment. He was trying to collect himself.

"D'you mean to say they're worth nothing at all?"

"Oh, I don't say that. Of course they're worth something, but you see, nobody's buying them now."

"Then you must just sell them for what you can get."

Macalister looked at Philip narrowly. He wondered whether he was very hard hit.

"I'm awfully sorry, old man, but we're all in the same boat. No one thought the war was going to hang on this way. I put you into them, but I was in myself too."

"It doesn't matter at all," said Philip. "One has to take one's chance."

He moved back to the table from which he had got up to talk to Macalister. He was dumfounded; his head suddenly began to ache furiously; but he did not want them to think him unmanly. He sat on for an hour. He laughed feverishly at everything they said. At last he got up to go.

"You take it pretty coolly," said Macalister, shaking hands with him. "I don't suppose anyone likes losing between three and four hundred pounds."

When Philip got back to his shabby little room he flung himself on his bed, and gave himself over to his despair. He kept on regretting his folly bitterly; and though he told himself that it was absurd to regret, for what had happened was inevitable just because it had happened, he could not help himself. He was utterly miserable. He could not sleep. He remembered all the ways he had wasted money during the last few years. His head ached dreadfully.

The following evening there came by the last post the statement of his account. He examined his pass-book. He found that when he had paid everything he would have seven pounds left. Seven pounds! He was thankful he had been able to pay. It would have been horrible to be obliged to confess to Macalister that he had not the money. He was dressing in the eye-department during the summer session, and he had bought an ophthalmoscope off a student who had one to sell. He had not paid for this, but he lacked the courage to tell the student that he wanted to go back on his bargain. Also he had to buy certain books. He had about five pounds to go on with. It lasted him six weeks; then he wrote to his uncle a letter which he thought very business-like; he said that owing to the war he had had grave losses and could not go on with his studies unless his uncle came to his help. He suggested that the Vicar should lend him a hundred and fifty pounds paid over the next eighteen months in monthly instalments; he would pay interest on this and promised to refund the capital by degrees when he began to earn money. He would be qualified in a year and a half at the latest, and he could be pretty sure then of getting an assistantship at three pounds a week. His uncle wrote back that he could do nothing. It was not fair to ask him to sell out when everything was at its worst, and the little he had he felt that his duty to himself made it necessary for him to keep in case of illness. He ended the letter with a little homily. He had warned Philip time after time, and Philip had never paid any attention to him; he

could not honestly say he was surprised; he had long expected that this would be the end of Philip's extravagance and want of balance. Philip grew hot and cold when he read this. It had never occurred to him that his uncle would refuse, and he burst into furious anger; but this was succeeded by utter blankness: if his uncle would not help him he could not go on at the hospital. Panic seized him and, putting aside his pride, he wrote again to the Vicar of Blackstable, placing the case before him more urgently; but perhaps he did not explain himself properly and his uncle did not realise in what desperate straits he was, for he answered that he could not change his mind; Philip was twenty-five and really ought to be earning his living. When he died Philip would come into a little, but till then he refused to give him a penny. Philip felt in the letter the satisfaction of a man who for many years had disapproved of his courses and now saw himself justified.

XCIX

PHILIP began to pawn his clothes. He reduced his expenses by eating only one meal a day beside his breakfast; and he ate it, bread and butter and cocoa, at four so that it should last him till next morning. He was so hungry by nine o'clock that he had to go to bed. He thought of borrowing money from Lawson, but the fear of a refusal held him back; at last he asked him for five pounds. Lawson lent it with pleasure, but, as he did so, said:

"You'll let me have it back in a week or so, won't you? I've got to pay my framer, and I'm awfully broke just now."

Philip knew he would not be able to return it, and the thought of what Lawson would think made him so ashamed that in a couple of days he took the money back untouched. Lawson was just going out to luncheon and asked Philip to come too. Philip could hardly eat, he was so glad to get some solid food. On Sunday he was sure of a good dinner from Athelny. He hesitated to tell the Athelnys what had happened to him: they had always looked upon him as comparatively well-to-do, and he had a dread that they would think less well of him if they knew he was penniless.

Though he had always been poor, the possibility of not having enough to eat had never occurred to him; it was not the sort of thing that happened to the people among whom he lived; and he was as ashamed as if he had some disgraceful disease. The situation in which he found himself was quite outside the range of his experience. He was so taken aback that he did not know what else to do than to go on at the hospital; he had a vague hope that something would turn up; he could not quite believe that what was happening to him was true; and he remembered how during his first term at school he had often thought his life was a dream from which he would awake to find himself once more at home. But very soon he foresaw that in a week or so he would have no money at all. He must set about trying to earn something at once. If he had been qualified, even with a club-foot, he could have gone out to the Cape, since the demand for medical men was now great. Except for his deformity he might have enlisted in one of the yeomanry regiments which were constantly being sent out. He went to the secretary of the Medical School and asked if he could give him the coaching of some backward student; but the secretary

held out no hope of getting him anything of the sort. Philip read the advertisement columns of the medical papers, and he applied for the post of unqualified assistant to a man who had a dispensary in the Fulham Road. When he went to see him, he saw the doctor glance at his club-foot; and on hearing that Philip was only in his fourth year at the hospital he said at once that his experience was insufficient: Philip understood that this was only an excuse; the man would not have an assistant who might not be as active as he wanted. Philip turned his attention to other means of earning money. He knew French and German and thought there might be some chance of finding a job as correspondence clerk; it made his heart sink, but he set his teeth; there was nothing else to do. Though too shy to answer the advertisements which demanded a personal application, he replied to those which asked for letters; but he had no experience to state and no recommendations: he was conscious that neither his German nor his French was commercial; he was ignorant of the terms used in business; he knew neither shorthand nor typewriting. He could not help recognising that his case was hopeless. He thought of writing to the solicitor who had been his father's executor, but he could not bring himself to, for it was contrary to his express advice that he had sold the mortgages in which his money had been invested. He knew from his uncle that Mr. Nixon thoroughly disapproved of him. He had gathered from Philip's year in the accountant's office that he was idle and incompetent.

"I'd sooner starve," Philip muttered to himself.

Once or twice the possibility of suicide presented itself to him: it would be easy to get something from the hospital dispensary, and it was a comfort to think that if the worst came to the worst he had at hand the means of making a painless end of himself; but it was not a course that he considered seriously. When Mildred had left him to go with Griffiths his anguish had been so great that he wanted to die in order to get rid of the pain. He did not feel like that now. He remembered that the Casualty Sister had told him how people oftener did away with themselves for want of money than for want of love; and he chuckled when he thought that he was an exception. He wished only that he could talk his worries over with somebody, but he could not bring himself to confess them. He was ashamed. He went on looking for work. He left his rent unpaid for three weeks, explaining to his landlady that he would get money at the end of the month; she did not say anything, but pursed her lips and looked grim. When the end of the month came and she asked if it would be convenient for

him to pay something on account, it made him feel very sick to say that he could not; he told her he would write to his uncle and was sure to be able to settle his bill on the following Saturday.

"Well, I 'ope you will, Mr. Carey, because I 'ave my rent to pay, and I can't afford to let accounts run on." She did not speak with anger, but with a determination that was rather frightening. She paused for a moment and then said: "If you don't pay next Saturday, I shall 'ave to complain to the secretary of the 'ospital."

"Oh yes, that'll be all right."

She looked at him for a little and glanced round the bare room. When she spoke it was without any emphasis, as though it were quite a natural thing to say.

"I've got a nice 'ot joint downstairs, and if you like to come down to the kitchen you're welcome to a bit of dinner."

Philip felt himself redden to the soles of his feet, and a sob caught at his throat.

"Thank you very much, Mrs. Higgins, but I'm not at all hungry."

"Very good, sir."

When she left the room Philip threw himself on his bed. He had to clench his fists in order to prevent himself from crying.

C

Saturday. It was the day on which he had promised to pay his landlady. He had been expecting something to turn up all through the week. He had found no work. He had never been driven to extremities before, and he was so dazed that he did not know what to do. He had at the back of his mind a feeling that the whole thing was a preposterous joke. He had no more than a few coppers left, he had sold all the clothes he could do without; he had some books and one or two odds and ends upon which he might have got a shilling or two, but the landlady was keeping an eye on his comings and goings: he was afraid she would stop him if he took anything more from his room. The only thing was to tell her that he could not pay his bill. He had not the courage. It was the middle of June. The night was fine and warm. He made up his mind to stay out. He walked slowly along the Chelsea Embankment, because the river was restful and quiet, till he was tired, and then sat on a bench and dozed. He did know how long he slept; he awoke with a start, dreaming that he was being shaken by a policeman and told to move on; but when he opened his eyes he found himself alone. He walked on, he did not know why, and at last came to Chiswick, where he slept again. Presently the hardness of the bench roused him. The night seemed very long. He shivered. He was seized with a sense of his misery; and he did not know what on earth to do: he was ashamed at having slept on the Embankment; it seemed peculiarly humiliating, and he felt his cheeks flush in the darkness. He remembered stories he had heard of those who did and how among them were officers, clergymen, and men who had been to universities: he wondered if he would become one of them, standing in a line to get soup from a charitable institution. It would be much better to commit suicide. He could not go on like that: Lawson would help him when he knew what straits he was in; it was absurd to let his pride prevent him from asking for assistance. He wondered why he had come such a cropper. He had always tried to do what he thought best, and everything had gone wrong. He had helped people when he could, he did not think he had been more selfish than anyone else, it seemed horribly unjust that he should be reduced to such a pass.

But it was no good thinking about it. He walked on. It was now light: the river was beautiful in the silence, and there was something mysterious in the early day; it was going to be very fine, and the sky, pale in the dawn, was cloudless. He felt very tired, and hunger was gnawing at his entrails, but he could not sit still; he was constantly afraid of being spoken to by a policeman. He dreaded the mortification of that. He felt dirty and wished he could have a wash. At last he found himself at Hampton Court. He felt that if he did not have something to eat he would cry. He chose a cheap eating-house and went in; there was a smell of hot things, and it made him feel slightly sick: he meant to eat something nourishing enough to keep him up for the rest of the day, but his stomach revolted at the sight of food. He had a cup of tea and some bread and butter. He remembered then that it was Sunday and he could go to the Athelnys; he thought of the roast beef and the Yorkshire pudding they would eat; but he was fearfully tired and could not face the happy, noisy family. He was feeling morose and wretched. He wanted to be left alone. He made up his mind that he would go into the gardens of the palace and lie down. His bones ached. Perhaps he could find a pump so that he could wash his hands and face and drink something; he was very thirsty; and now that he was no longer hungry he thought with pleasure of the flowers and the lawns and the great, leafy trees. He felt that there he could think out better what he must do. He lay on the grass, in the shade, and lit his pipe. For economy's sake he had for a long time confined himself to two pipes a day; he was thankful now that his pouch was full. He did not know what people did when they had no money. Presently he fell asleep. When he awoke it was nearly mid-day, and he thought that soon he must be setting out for London so as to be there in the early morning and answer any advertisements which seemed to promise. He thought of his uncle, who had told him that he would leave him at his death the little he had; Philip did not in the least know how much this was: it could not be more than a few hundred pounds. He wondered whether he could raise money on the reversion. Not without the old man's consent, and that he would never give.

"The only thing I can do is to hang on somehow till he dies."

Philip reckoned his age. The Vicar of Blackstable was well over seventy. He had chronic bronchitis, but many old men had that and lived on indefinitely. Meanwhile something must turn up; Philip could not get away from the feeling that his position was altogether abnormal; people in his particular station did not

starve. It was because he could not bring himself to believe in the reality of his experience that he did not give way to utter despair. He made up his mind to borrow half a sovereign from Lawson. He stayed in the garden all day and smoked when he felt very hungry; he did not mean to eat anything until he was setting out again for London: it was a long way and he must keep up his strength for that. He started when the day began to grow cooler, and slept on benches when he was tired. No one disturbed him. He had a wash and brush up, and a shave at Victoria, some tea and bread and butter, and while he was eating this read the advertisement columns of the morning paper. As he looked down them his eye fell upon an announcement asking for a salesman in the 'furnishing drapery' department of some well-known stores. He had a curious little sinking of the heart, for with his middle-class prejudices it seemed dreadful to go into a shop; but he shrugged his shoulders, after all what did it matter? and he made up his mind to have a shot at it. He had a queer feeling that by accepting every humiliation, by going out to meet it even, he was forcing the hand of fate. When he presented himself, feeling horribly shy, in the department at nine o'clock he found that many others were there before him. They were of all ages, from boys of sixteen to men of forty; some were talking to one another in undertones, but most were silent; and when he took up his place those around him gave him a look of hostility. He heard one man say:

"The only thing I look forward to is getting my refusal soon enough to give me time to look elsewhere."

The man, standing next him, glanced at Philip and asked:

"Had any experience?"

"No," said Philip.

He paused a moment and then made a remark: "Even the smaller houses won't see you without appointment after lunch."

Philip looked at the assistants. Some were draping chintzes and cretonnes, and others, his neighbour told him, were preparing country orders that had come in by post. At about a quarter past nine the buyer arrived. He heard one of the men who were waiting say to another that it was Mr. Gibbons. He was middle-aged, short and corpulent, with a black beard and dark, greasy hair. He had brisk movements and a clever face. He wore a silk hat and a frock coat, the lapel of which was adorned with a white geranium surrounded by leaves. He went into his office, leaving the door open; it was very small and contained only an American roll-desk in the corner, a book-case, and a cupboard. The men standing outside watched him mechanically take the geranium out of his

coat and put it in an ink-pot filled with water. It was against the rules to wear flowers in business.

[During the day the department men who wanted to keep in with the governor admired the flower.

"I've never seen better," they said, "you didn't grow it yourself?"

"Yes I did," he smiled, and a gleam of pride filled his intelligent eyes.]

He took off his hat and changed his coat, glanced at the letters and then at the men who were waiting to see him. He made a slight sign with one finger, and the first in the cue stepped into the office. They filed past him one by one and answered his questions. He put them very briefly, keeping his eyes fixed on the applicant's face.

"Age? Experience? Why did you leave your job?"

He listened to the replies without expression. When it came to Philip's turn he fancied that Mr. Gibbons stared at him curiously. Philip's clothes were neat and tolerably cut. He looked a little different from the others.

"Experience?"

"I'm afraid I haven't any," said Philip.

"No good."

Philip walked out of the office. The ordeal had been so much less painful than he expected that he felt no particular disappointment. He could hardly hope to succeed in getting a place the first time he tried. He had kept the newspaper and now looked at the advertisements again: a shop in Holborn needed a salesman too, and he went there; but when he arrived he found that someone had already been engaged. If he wanted to get anything to eat that day he must go to Lawson's studio before he went out to luncheon, so he made his way along the Brompton Road to Yeoman's Row.

"I say, I'm rather broke till the end of the month," he said, as soon as he found an opportunity. "I wish you'd lend me half a sovereign, will you?"

It was incredible the difficulty he found in asking for money; and he remembered the casual way, as though almost they were conferring a favour, men at the hospital had extracted small sums out of him which they had no intention of repaying.

"Like a shot," said Lawson.

But when he put his hand in his pocket he found that he had only eight shillings. Philip's heart sank.

"Oh well, lend me five bob, will you?" he said lightly.

"Here you are."

Philip went to the public baths in Westminster and spent sixpence on a bath. Then he got himself something to eat. He did not know what to do with himself in the afternoon. He would not go back to the hospital in case anyone should ask him questions, and besides, he had nothing to do there now; they would wonder in the two or three departments he had work in why he did not come, but they must think what they chose, it did not matter: he would not be the first student who had dropped out without warning. He went to the free library, and looked at the papers till they wearied him, then he took out Stevenson's *New Arabian Nights;* but he found he could not read: the words meant nothing to him, and he continued to brood over his helplessness. He kept on thinking the same things all the time, and the fixity of his thoughts made his head ache. At last, craving for fresh air, he went into the Green Park and lay down on the grass. He thought miserably of his deformity, which made it impossible for him to go to the war. He went to sleep and dreamed that he was suddenly sound of foot and out at the Cape in a regiment of Yeomanry; the pictures he had looked at in the illustrated papers gave materials for his fancy; and he saw himself on the Veldt, in khaki, sitting with other men round a fire at night. When he awoke he found that it was still quite light, and presently he heard Big Ben strike seven. He had twelve hours to get through with nothing to do. He dreaded the interminable night. The sky was overcast and he feared it would rain; he would have to go to a lodging-house where he could get a bed; he had seen them advertised on lamps outside houses in Lambeth: Good Beds sixpence; he had never been inside one, and dreaded the foul smell and the vermin. He made up his mind to stay in the open air if he possibly could. He remained in the park till it was closed and then began to walk about. He was very tired. The thought came to him that an accident would be a piece of luck, so that he could be taken to a hospital and lie there, in a clean bed, for weeks. At midnight he was so hungry that he could not go without food any more, so he went to a coffee stall at Hyde Park Corner and ate a couple of potatoes and had a cup of coffee. Then he walked again. He felt too restless to sleep, and he had a horrible dread of being moved on by the police. He noted that he was beginning to look upon the constable from quite a new angle. This was the third night he had spent out. Now and then he sat on the benches in Piccadilly and towards morning he strolled down to the Embankment. He listened to the striking of Big Ben, marking every quarter of an hour, and reckoned out how

long it left till the city woke again. In the morning he spent a few coppers on making himself neat and clean, bought a paper to read the advertisements, and set out once more on the search for work.

He went on in this way for several days. He had very little food and began to feel weak and ill, so that he had hardly enough energy to go on looking for the work which seemed so desperately hard to find. He was growing used now to the long waiting at the back of a shop on the chance that he would be taken on, and the curt dismissal. He walked to all parts of London in answer to the advertisements, and he came to know by sight men who applied as fruitlessly as himself. One or two tried to make friends with him, but he was too tired and too wretched to accept their advances. He did not go any more to Lawson, because he owed him five shillings. He began to be too dazed to think clearly and ceased very much to care what would happen to him. He cried a good deal. At first he was very angry with himself for this and ashamed, but he found it relieved him, and somehow made him feel less hungry. In the very early morning he suffered a good deal from cold. One night he went into his room to change his linen; he slipped in about three, when he was quite sure everyone would be asleep, and out again at five; he lay on the bed and its softness was enchanting; all his bones ached, and as he lay he revelled in the pleasure of it; it was so delicious that he did not want to go to sleep. He was growing used to want of food and did not feel very hungry, but only weak. Constantly now at the back of his mind was the thought of doing away with himself, but he used all the strength he had not to dwell on it, because he was afraid the temptation would get hold of him so that he would not be able to help himself. He kept on saying to himself that it would be absurd to commit suicide, since something must happen soon; he could not get over the impression that his situation was too preposterous to be taken quite seriously; it was like an illness which must be endured but from which he was bound to recover. Every night he swore that nothing would induce him to put up with such another and determined next morning to write to his uncle, or to Mr. Nixon, the solicitor, or to Lawson; but when the time came he could not bring himself to make the humiliating confession of his utter failure. He did not know how Lawson would take it. In their friendship Lawson had been scatterbrained and he had prided himself on his common sense. He would have to tell the whole history of his folly. He had an uneasy feeling that Lawson, after helping him, would turn the cold shoulder on him. His uncle and the solicitor would of course do something

for him, but he dreaded their reproaches. He did not want anyone to reproach him: he clenched his teeth and repeated that what had happened was inevitable just because it had happened. Regret was absurd.

The days were unending, and the five shillings Lawson had lent him would not last much longer. Philip longed for Sunday to come so that he could go to Athelny's. He did not know what prevented him from going there sooner, except perhaps that he wanted so badly to get through on his own; for Athelny, who had been in straits as desperate, was the only person who could do anything for him. Perhaps after dinner he could bring himself to tell Athelny that he was in difficulties. Philip repeated to himself over and over again what he should say to him. He was dreadfully afraid that Athelny would put him off with airy phrases: that would be so horrible that he wanted to delay as long as possible the putting of him to the test. Philip had lost all confidence in his fellows.

Saturday night was cold and raw. Philip suffered horribly. From mid-day on Saturday till he dragged himself wearily to Athelny's house he ate nothing. He spent his last twopence on Sunday morning on a wash and a brush up in the lavatory at Charing Cross.

CI

When Philip rang a head was put out of the window, and in a minute he heard a noisy clatter on the stairs as the children ran down to let him in. It was a pale, anxious, thin face that he bent down for them to kiss. He was so moved by their exuberant affection that, to give himself time to recover, he made excuses to linger on the stairs. He was in a hysterical state and almost anything was enough to make him cry. They asked him why he had not come on the previous Sunday, and he told them he had been ill; they wanted to know what was the matter with him; and Philip, to amuse them, suggested a mysterious ailment, the name of which, double-barrelled and barbarous with its mixture of Greek and Latin (medical nomenclature bristled with such), made them shriek with delight. They dragged Philip into the parlour and made him repeat it for their father's edification. Athelny got up and shook hands with him. He stared at Philip, but with his round, bulging eyes he always seemed to stare. Philip did not know why on this occasion it made him self-conscious.

"We missed you last Sunday," he said.

Philip could never tell lies without embarrassment, and he was scarlet when he finished his explanation for not coming. Then Mrs. Athelny entered and shook hands with him.

"I hope you're better, Mr. Carey," she said.

He did not know why she imagined that anything had been the matter with him, for the kitchen door was closed when he came up with the children, and they had not left him.

"Dinner won't be ready for another ten minutes," she said, in her slow drawl. "Won't you have an egg beaten up in a glass of milk while you're waiting?"

There was a look of concern on her face which made Philip uncomfortable. He forced a laugh and answered that he was not at all hungry. Sally came in to lay the table, and Philip began to chaff her. It was the family joke that she would be as fat as an aunt of Mrs. Athelny, called Aunt Elizabeth, whom the children had never seen but regarded as the type of obscene corpulence.

"I say, what *has* happened since I saw you last, Sally?" Philip began.

"Nothing that I know of."

"I believe you've been putting on weight."

"I'm sure you haven't," she retorted. "You're a perfect skeleton."

Philip reddened.

"That's a *tu quoque,* Sally," cried her father. "You will be fined one golden hair of your head. Jane, fetch the shears."

"Well, he is thin, father," remonstrated Sally. "He's just skin and bone."

"That's not the question, child. He is at perfect liberty to be thin, but your obesity is contrary to decorum."

As he spoke he put his arm proudly round her waist and looked at her with admiring eyes.

"Let me get on with the table, father. If I am comfortable there are some who don't seem to mind it."

"The hussy!" cried Athelny, with a dramatic wave of the hand. "She taunts me with the notorious fact that Joseph, a son of Levi who sells jewels in Holborn, has made her an offer of marriage."

"Have you accepted him, Sally?" asked Philip.

"Don't you know father better than that by this time? There's not a word of truth in it."

"Well, if he hasn't made you an offer of marriage," cried Athelny, "by Saint George and Merry England, I will seize him by the nose and demand of him immediately what are his intentions."

"Sit down, father, dinner's ready. Now then, you children, get along with you and wash your hands all of you, and don't shirk it, because I mean to look at them before you have a scrap of dinner, so there."

Philip thought he was ravenous till he began to eat, but then discovered that his stomach turned against food, and he could eat hardly at all. His brain was weary; and he did not notice that Athelny, contrary to his habit, spoke very little. Philip was relieved to be sitting in a comfortable house, but every now and then he could not prevent himself from glancing out of the window. The day was tempestuous. The fine weather had broken; and it was cold, and there was a bitter wind; now and again gusts of rain drove against the window. Philip wondered what he should do that night. The Athelnys went to bed early, and he could not stay where he was after ten o'clock. His heart sank at the thought of going out into the bleak darkness. It seemed more terrible now that he was with his friends than when he was outside and alone. He kept on saying to himself that there were plenty more who would be spending the night out of doors. He strove to distract his mind by talking

but in the middle of his words a spatter of rain against the window would make him start.

"It's like March weather," said Athelny. "Not the sort of day one would like to be crossing the Channel."

Presently they finished, and Sally came in and cleared away.

"Would you like a twopenny stinker?" said Athelny, handing him a cigar.

Philip took it and inhaled the smoke with delight. It soothed him extraordinarily. When Sally had finished Athelny told her to shut the door after her.

"Now we shan't be disturbed," he said, turning to Philip. "I've arranged with Betty not to let the children come in till I call them."

Philip gave him a startled look, but before he could take in the meaning of his words, Athelny, fixing his glasses on his nose with the gesture habitual to him, went on.

"I wrote to you last Sunday to ask if anything was the matter with you, and as you didn't answer I went to your rooms on Wednesday."

Philip turned his head away and did not answer. His heart began to beat violently. Athelny did not speak, and presently the silence seemed intolerable to Philip. He could not think of a single word to say.

"Your landlady told me you hadn't been in since Saturday night, and she said you owed her for the last month. Where have you been sleeping all this week?"

It made Philip sick to answer. He stared out of the window.

"Nowhere."

"I tried to find you."

"Why?" asked Philip.

"Betty and I have been just as broke in our day, only we had babies to look after. Why didn't you come here?"

"I couldn't."

Philip was afraid he was going to cry. He felt very weak. He shut his eyes and frowned, trying to control himself. He felt a sudden flash of anger with Athelny because he would not leave him alone; but he was broken; and presently, his eyes still closed, slowly in order to keep his voice steady, he told him the story of his adventures during the last few weeks. As he spoke it seemed to him that he had behaved inanely, and it made it still harder to tell. He felt that Athelny would think him an utter fool.

"Now you're coming to live with us till you find something to do," said Athelny, when he had finished.

Philip flushed, he knew not why.

"Oh, it's awfully kind of you, but I don't think I'll do that."

"Why not?"

Philip did not answer. He had refused instinctively from fear that he would be a bother, and he had a natural bashfulness of accepting favours. He knew besides that the Athelnys lived from hand to mouth, and with their large family had neither space nor money to entertain a stranger.

"Of course you must come here," said Athelny. "Thorpe will tuck in with one of his brothers and you can sleep in his bed. You don't suppose your food's going to make any difference to us."

Philip was afraid to speak, and Athelny, going to the door, called his wife.

"Betty," he said, when she came in, "Mr. Carey's coming to live with us."

"Oh, that is nice," she said. "I'll go and get the bed ready."

She spoke in such a hearty, friendly tone, taking everything for granted, that Philip was deeply touched. He never expected people to be kind to him, and when they were it surprised and moved him. Now he could not prevent two large tears from rolling down his cheeks. The Athelnys discussed the arrangements and pretended not to notice to what a state his weakness had brought him. When Mrs. Athelny left them Philip leaned back in his chair, and looking out of the window laughed a little.

"It's not a very nice night to be out, is it?"

CII

Athelny told Philip that he could easily get him something to do in the large firm of linendrapers in which himself worked. Several of the assistants had gone to the war, and Lynn and Sedley with patriotic zeal had promised to keep their places open for them. They put the work of the heroes on those who remained, and since they did not increase the wages of these were able at once to exhibit public spirit and effect an economy; but the war continued and trade was less depressed; the holidays were coming, when numbers of the staff went away for a fortnight at a time: they were bound to engage more assistants. Philip's experience had made him doubtful whether even then they would engage him; but Athelny, representing himself as a person of consequence in the firm, insisted that the manager could refuse him nothing. Philip, with his training in Paris, would be very useful; it was only a matter of waiting a little and he was bound to get a well-paid job to design costumes and draw posters. Philip made a poster for the summer sale and Athelny took it away. Two days later he brought it back, saying that the manager admired it very much and regretted with all his heart that there was no vacancy just then in that department. Philip asked whether there was nothing else he could do.

"I'm afraid not."

"Are you quite sure?"

"Well, the fact is they're advertising for a shop-walker tomorrow," said Athelny, looking at him doubtfully through his glasses.

"D'you think I stand any chance of getting it?"

Athelny was a little confused; he had led Philip to expect something much more splendid; on the other hand he was too poor to go on providing him indefinitely with board and lodging.

"You might take it while you wait for something better. You always stand a better chance if you're engaged by the firm already."

"I'm not proud, you know," smiled Philip.

"If you decide on that you must be there at a quarter to nine tomorrow morning."

Notwithstanding the war there was evidently much difficulty in finding work, for when Philip went to the shop many men were waiting already. He recognised some whom he had seen in his own searching, and there was one whom he had noticed lying about

the park in the afternoon. To Philip now that suggested that he was as homeless as himself and passed the night out of doors. The men were of all sorts, old and young, tall and short; but every one had tried to make himself smart for the interview with the manager: they had carefully brushed hair and scrupulously clean hands. They waited in a passage which Philip learnt afterwards led up to the dining-hall and the work rooms; it was broken every few yards by five or six steps. Though there was electric light in the shop here was only gas, with wire cages over it for protection, and it flared noisily. Philip arrived punctually, but it was nearly ten o'clock when he was admitted into the office. It was three-cornered, like a cut of cheese lying on its side: on the walls were pictures of women in corsets, and two poster-proofs, one of a man in pyjamas, green and white in large stripes, and the other of a ship in full sail ploughing an azure sea: on the sail was printed in large letters 'great white sale.' The widest side of the office was the back of one of the shop-windows, which was being dressed at the time, and an assistant went to and fro during the interview. The manager was reading a letter. He was a florid man, with sandy hair and a large sandy moustache; from the middle of his watch-chain hung a bunch of football medals. He sat in his shirt-sleeves at a large desk with a telephone by his side; before him were the day's advertisements, Athelny's work, and cuttings from newspapers pasted on a card. He gave Philip a glance but did not speak to him; he dictated a letter to the typist, a girl who sat at a small table in one corner; then he asked Philip his name, age, and what experience he had had. He spoke with a cockney twang in a high, metallic voice which he seemed not able always to control; Philip noticed that his upper teeth were large and protruding; they gave you the impression that they were loose and would come out if you gave them a sharp tug.

"I think Mr. Athelny has spoken to you about me," said Philip.

"Oh, you are the young feller who did that poster?"

"Yes, sir."

"No good to us, you know, not a bit of good."

He looked Philip up and down. He seemed to notice that Philip was in some way different from the men who had preceded him.

"You'd 'ave to get a frock coat, you know. I suppose you 'aven't got one. You seem a respectable young feller. I suppose you found art didn't pay."

Philip could not tell whether he meant to engage him or not. He threw remarks at him in a hostile way.

"Where's your home?"

"My father and mother died when I was a child."

"I like to give young fellers a chance. Many's the one I've given their chance to and they're managers of departments now. And they're grateful to me, I'll say that for them. They know what I done for them. Start at the bottom of the ladder, that's the only way to learn the business, and then if you stick to it there's no knowing what it can lead to. If you suit, one of these days you may find yourself in a position like what mine is. Bear that in mind, young feller."

"I'm very anxious to do my best, sir," said Philip.

He knew that he must put in the sir whenever he could, but it sounded odd to him, and he was afraid of overdoing it. The manager liked talking. It gave him a happy consciousness of his own importance, and he did not give Philip his decision till he had used a great many words.

"Well, I daresay you'll do," he said at last, in a pompous way. "Anyhow I don't mind giving you a trial."

"Thank you very much, sir."

"You can start at once. I'll give you six shillings a week and your keep. Everything found, you know; the six shillings is only pocket money, to do what you like with, paid monthly. Start on Monday. I suppose you've got no cause of complaint with that."

"No, sir."

"Harrington Street, d'you know where that is, Shaftesbury Avenue. That's where you sleep. Number ten, it is. You can sleep there on Sunday night, if you like; that's just as you please, or you can send your box there on Monday." The manager nodded: "Good-morning."

CIII

Mrs. Athelny lent Philip money to pay his landlady enough of her bill to let him take his things away. For five shillings and the pawn-ticket on a suit he was able to get from a pawnbroker a frock coat which fitted him fairly well. He redeemed the rest of his clothes. He sent his box to Harrington Street by Carter Patterson and on Monday morning went with Athelny to the shop. Athelny introduced him to the buyer of the costumes and left him. The buyer was a pleasant, fussy little man of thirty, named Sampson; he shook hands with Philip, and, in order to show his own accomplishment of which he was very proud, asked him if he spoke French. He was surprised when Philip told him he did.

"Any other language?"

"I speak German."

"Oh! I go over to Paris myself occasionally. *Parlez-vous français?* Ever been to Maxim's?"

Philip was stationed at the top of the stairs in the 'costumes.' His work consisted in directing people to the various departments. There seemed a great many of them as Mr. Sampson tripped them off his tongue. Suddenly he noticed that Philip limped.

"What's the matter with your leg?" he asked.

"I've got a club-foot," said Philip. "But it doesn't prevent my walking or anything like that."

The buyer looked at it for a moment doubtfully, and Philip surmised that he was wondering why the manager had engaged him. Philip knew that he had not noticed there was anything the matter with him.

"I don't expect you to get them all correct the first day. If you're in any doubt all you've got to do is to ask one of the young ladies."

Mr. Sampson turned away; and Philip, trying to remember where this or the other department was, watched anxiously for the customer in search of information. At one o'clock he went up to dinner. The dining-room, on the top floor of the vast building, was large, long, and well lit; but all the windows were shut to keep out the dust, and there was a horrid smell of cooking. There were long tables covered with cloths, with big glass bottles of

water at intervals, and down the centre salt cellars and bottles of vinegar. The assistants crowded in noisily, and sat down on forms still warm from those who had dined at twelve-thirty.

"No pickles," remarked the man next to Philip.

He was a tall thin young man, with a hooked nose and a pasty face; he had a long head, unevenly shaped as though the skull had been pushed in here and there oddly, and on his forehead and neck were large acne spots red and inflamed. His name was Harris. Philip discovered that on some days there were large soup-plates down the table full of mixed pickles. They were very popular. There were no knives and forks, but in a minute a large fat boy in a white coat came in with a couple of handfuls of them and threw them loudly on the middle of the table. Each man took what he wanted; they were warm and greasy from recent washing in dirty water. Plates of meat swimming in gravy were handed round by boys in white jackets, and as they flung each plate down with the quick gesture of a prestidigitator the gravy slopped over on to the table-cloth. Then they brought large dishes of cabbages and potatoes; the sight of them turned Philip's stomach; he noticed that everyone poured quantities of vinegar over them. The noise was awful. They talked and laughed and shouted, and there was the clatter of knives and forks, and strange sounds of eating. Philip was glad to get back into the department. He was beginning to remember where each one was, and had less often to ask one of the assistants, when somebody wanted to know the way.

"First to the right. Second on the left, madam."

One or two of the girls spoke to him, just a word when things were slack, and he felt they were taking his measure. At five he was sent up again to the dining-room for tea. He was glad to sit down. There were large slices of bread heavily spread with butter; and many had pots of jam, which were kept in the 'store' and had their names written on.

Philip was exhausted when work stopped at half past six. Harris, the man he had sat next to at dinner, offered to take him over to Harrington Street to show him where he was to sleep. He told Philip there was a spare bed in his room, and, as the other rooms were full, he expected Philip would be put there. The house in Harrington Street had been a bootmaker's; and the shop was used as a bed-room; but it was very dark, since the window had been boarded three parts up, and as this did not open the only ventilation came from a small skylight at the far end. There was a musty smell, and Philip was thankful that he would not have to sleep there. Harris took him up to the sitting-room, which

was on the first floor; it had an old piano in it with a keyboard that looked like a row of decayed teeth; and on the table in a cigar-box without a lid was a set of dominoes; old numbers of *The Strand Magazine* and of *The Graphic* were lying about. The other rooms were used as bed-rooms. That in which Philip was to sleep was at the top of the house. There were six beds in it, and a trunk or a box stood by the side of each. The only furniture was a chest of drawers: it had four large drawers and two small ones, and Philip as the new-comer had one of these; there were keys to them, but as they were all alike they were not of much use, and Harris advised him to keep his valuables in his trunk. There was a looking-glass on the chimney-piece. Harris showed Philip the lavatory, which was a fairly large room with eight basins in a row, and here all the inmates did their washing. It led into another room in which were two baths, discoloured, the woodwork stained with soap; and in them were dark rings at various intervals which indicated the water marks of different baths.

When Harris and Philip went back to their bedroom they found a tall man changing his clothes and a boy of sixteen whistling as loud as he could while he brushed his hair. In a minute or two without saying a word to anybody the tall man went out. Harris winked at the boy, and the boy, whistling still, winked back. Harris told Philip that the man was called Prior; he had been in the army and now served in the silks; he kept pretty much to himself, and he went off every night, just like that, without so much as a good-evening, to see his girl. Harris went out too, and only the boy remained to watch Philip curiously while he unpacked his things. His name was Bell and he was serving his time for nothing in the haberdashery. He was much interested in Philip's evening clothes. He told him about the other men in the room and asked him every sort of question about himself. He was a cheerful youth, and in the intervals of conversation sang in a half-broken voice snatches of music-hall songs. When Philip had finished he went out to walk about the streets and look at the crowd; occasionally he stopped outside the doors of restaurants and watched the people going in; he felt hungry, so he bought a bath bun and ate it while he strolled along. He had been given a latch-key by the prefect, the man who turned out the gas at a quarter past eleven, but afraid of being locked out he returned in good time; he had learned already the system of fines: you had to pay a shilling if you came in after eleven, and half a crown after a quarter past, and you were reported besides: if it happened three times you were dismissed.

All but the soldier were in when Philip arrived and two were already in bed. Philip was greeted with cries.

"Oh, Clarence! Naughty boy!"

He discovered that Bell had dressed up the bolster in his evening clothes. The boy was delighted with his joke.

"You must wear them at the social evening, Clarence."

"He'll catch the belle of Lynn's, if he's not careful."

Philip had already heard of the social evenings, for the money stopped from the wages to pay for them was one of the grievances of the staff. It was only two shillings a month, and it covered medical attendance and the use of a library of worn novels; but as four shillings a month besides was stopped for washing, Philip discovered that a quarter of his six shillings a week would never be paid to him.

Most of the men were eating thick slices of fat bacon between a roll of bread cut in two. These sandwiches, the assistants' usual supper, were supplied by a small shop a few doors off at twopence each. The soldier rolled in; silently, rapidly, took off his clothes and threw himself into bed. At ten minutes past eleven the gas gave a big jump and five minutes later went out. The soldier went to sleep, but the others crowded round the big window in their pyjamas and night-shirts and, throwing remains of their sandwiches at the women who passed in the street below, shouted to them facetious remarks. The house opposite, six storeys high, was a workshop for Jewish tailors who left off work at eleven; the rooms were brightly lit and there were no blinds to the windows. The sweater's daughter—the family consisted of father, mother, two small boys, and a girl of twenty—went round the house to put out the lights when work was over, and sometimes she allowed herself to be made love to by one of the tailors. The shop assistants in Philip's room got a lot of amusement out of watching the manœuvres of one man or another to stay behind, and they made small bets on which would succeed. At midnight the people were turned out of the Harrington Arms at the end of the street, and soon after they all went to bed: Bell, who slept nearest the door, made his way across the room by jumping from bed to bed, and even when he got to his own would not stop talking. At last everything was silent but for the steady snoring of the soldier, and Philip went to sleep.

He was awaked at seven by the loud ringing of a bell, and by a quarter to eight they were all dressed and hurrying downstairs in their stockinged feet to pick out their boots. They laced them as they ran along to the shop in Oxford Street for breakfast. If they

were a minute later than eight they got none, nor, once in, were they allowed out to get themselves anything to eat. Sometimes, if they knew they could not get into the building in time, they stopped at the little shop near their quarters and bought a couple of buns; but this cost money, and most went without food till dinner. Philip ate some bread and butter, drank a cup of tea, and at half past eight began his day's work again.

"First to the right. Second on the left, madam."

Soon he began to answer the questions quite mechanically. The work was monotonous and very tiring. After a few days his feet hurt him so that he could hardly stand: the thick soft carpets made them burn, and at night his socks were painful to remove. It was a common complaint, and his fellow 'floormen' told him that socks and boots just rotted away from the continual sweating. All the men in his room suffered in the same fashion, and they relieved the pain by sleeping with their feet outside the bed-clothes. At first Philip could not walk at all and was obliged to spend a good many of his evenings in the sitting-room at Harrington Street with his feet in a pail of cold water. His companion on these occasions was Bell, the lad in the haberdashery, who stayed in often to arrange the stamps he collected. As he fastened them with little pieces of stamp-paper he whistled monotonously.

CIV

THE social evenings took place on alternate Mondays. There was one at the beginning of Philip's second week at Lynn's. He arranged to go with one of the women in his department.

"Meet 'em 'alf-way," she said, "same as I do."

This was Mrs. Hodges, a little woman of five and forty, with badly dyed hair; she had a yellow face with a network of small red veins all over it, and yellow whites to her pale blue eyes. She took a fancy to Philip and called him by his Christian name before he had been in the shop a week.

"We've both known what it is to come down," she said.

She told Philip that her real name was not Hodges, but she always referred to "me 'usband Misterodges;" he was a barrister and he treated her simply shocking, so she left him as she preferred to be independent like; but she had known what it was to drive in her own carriage, dear—she called everyone dear—and they always had late dinner at home. She used to pick her teeth with the pin of an enormous silver brooch. It was in the form of a whip and a hunting-crop crossed, with two spurs in the middle. Philip was ill at ease in his new surroundings, and the girls in the shop called him 'sidey.' One addressed him as Phil, and he did not answer because he had not the least idea that she was speaking to him; so she tossed her head, saying he was a 'stuck-up thing,' and next time with ironical emphasis called him Mister Carey. She was a Miss Jewell, and she was going to marry a doctor. The other girls had never seen him, but they said he must be a gentleman as he gave her such lovely presents.

"Never you mind what they say, dear," said Mrs. Hodges. "I've 'ad to go through it same as you 'ave. They don't know any better, poor things. You take my word for it, they'll like you all right if you 'old your own same as I 'ave."

The social evening was held in the restaurant in the basement. The tables were put on one side so that there might be room for dancing, and smaller ones were set out for progressive whist.

"The 'eads 'ave to get there early," said Mrs. Hodges.

She introduced him to Miss Bennett, who was the belle of Lynn's. She was the buyer in the 'Petticoats,' and when Philip entered was engaged in conversation with the buyer in the 'Gentlemen's

Hosiery;' Miss Bennett was a woman of massive proportions, with a very large red face heavily powdered and a bust of imposing dimensions; her flaxen hair was arranged with elaboration. She was overdressed, but not badly dressed, in black with a high collar, and she wore black *glacé* gloves, in which she played cards; she had several heavy gold chains round her neck, bangles on her wrists, and circular photograph pendants, one being of Queen Alexandra; she carried a black satin bag and chewed Sen-sens.

"Pleased to meet you, Mr. Carey," she said. "This is your first visit to our social evenings, ain't it? I expect you feel a bit shy, but there's no cause to, I promise you that."

She did her best to make people feel at home. She slapped them on the shoulders and laughed a great deal.

"Ain't I a pickle?" she cried, turning to Philip. "What must you think of me? But I can't 'elp meself."

Those who were going to take part in the social evening came in, the younger members of the staff mostly, boys who had not girls of their own, and girls who had not yet found anyone to walk with. Several of the young gentlemen wore lounge suits with white evening ties and red silk handkerchiefs; they were going to perform, and they had a busy, abstracted air; some were self-confident, but others were nervous, and they watched their public with an anxious eye. Presently a girl with a great deal of hair sat at the piano and ran her hands noisily across the keyboard. When the audience had settled itself she looked round and gave the name of her piece.

"*A Drive in Russia.*"

There was a round of clapping during which she deftly fixed bells to her wrists. She smiled a little and immediately burst into energetic melody. There was a great deal more clapping when she finished, and when this was over, as an encore, she gave a piece which imitated the sea; there were little trills to represent the lapping waves and thundering chords, with the loud pedal down, to suggest a storm. After this a gentleman sang a song called *Bid me Good-bye,* and as an encore obliged with *Sing me to Sleep.* The audience measured their enthusiasm with a nice discrimination. Everyone was applauded till he gave an encore, and so that there might be no jealousy no one was applauded more than anyone else. Miss Bennett sailed up to Philip.

"I'm sure you play or sing, Mr. Carey," she said archly. "I can see it in your face."

"I'm afraid I don't."

"Don't you even recite?"

"I have no parlour tricks."

The buyer in the 'gentleman's hosiery' was a well-known reciter, and he was called upon loudly to perform by all the assistants in his department. Needing no pressing, he gave a long poem of tragic character, in which he rolled his eyes, put his hand on his chest, and acted as though he were in great agony. The point, that he had eaten cucumber for supper, was divulged in the last line and was greeted with laughter, a little forced because everyone knew the poem well, but loud and long. Miss Bennett did not sing, play, or recite.

"Oh no, she 'as a little game of her own," said Mrs. Hodges.

"Now, don't you begin chaffing me. The fact is I know quite a lot about palmistry and second sight."

"Oh, do tell my 'and, Miss Bennett," cried the girls in her department, eager to please her.

"I don't like telling 'ands, I don't really. I've told people such terrible things and they've all come true, it makes one superstituous like."

"Oh, Miss Bennett, just for once."

A little crowd collected round her, and, amid screams of embarrassment, giggles, blushings, and cries of dismay or admiration, she talked mysteriously of fair and dark men, of money in a letter, and of journeys, till the sweat stood in heavy beads on her painted face.

"Look at me," she said. "I'm all of a perspiration."

Supper was at nine. There were cakes, buns, sandwiches, tea and coffee, all free; but if you wanted mineral water you had to pay for it. Gallantry often led young men to offer the ladies ginger beer, but common decency made them refuse. Miss Bennett was very fond of ginger beer, and she drank two and sometimes three bottles during the evening; but she insisted on paying for them herself. The men liked her for that.

"She's a rum old bird," they said, "but mind you, she's not a bad sort, she's not like what some are."

After supper progressive whist was played. This was very noisy, and there was a great deal of laughing and shouting, as people moved from table to table. Miss Bennett grew hotter and hotter.

"Look at me," she said. "I'm all of a perspiration."

In due course one of the more dashing of the young men remarked that if they wanted to dance they'd better begin. The girl who had played the accompaniments sat at the piano and placed a decided foot on the loud pedal. She played a dreamy waltz, marking the time with the bass, while with the right hand she 'tiddled' in alternate

octaves. By way of a change she crossed her hands and played the air in the bass.

"She does play well, doesn't she?" Mrs. Hodges remarked to Philip. "And what's more she's never 'ad a lesson in 'er life; it's all ear."

Miss Bennett liked dancing and poetry better than anything in the world. She danced well, but very, very slowly, and an expression came into her eyes as though her thoughts were far, far away. She talked breathlessly of the floor and the heat and the supper. She said that the Portman Rooms had the best floor in London and she always liked the dances there; they were very select, and she couldn't bear dancing with all sorts of men you didn't know anything about; why, you might be exposing yourself to you didn't know what all. Nearly all the people danced very well, and they enjoyed themselves. Sweat poured down their faces, and the very high collars of the young men grew limp.

Philip looked on, and a greater depression seized him than he remembered to have felt for a long time. He felt intolerably alone. He did not go, because he was afraid to seem supercilious, and he talked with the girls and laughed, but in his heart was unhappiness. Miss Bennett asked him if he had a girl.

"No," he smiled.

"Oh, well, there's plenty to choose from here. And they're very nice respectable girls, some of them. I expect you'll have a girl before you've been here long."

She looked at him very archly.

"Meet 'em 'alf-way," said Mrs. Hodges. "That's what I tell him."

It was nearly eleven o'clock, and the party broke up. Philip could not get to sleep. Like the others he kept his aching feet outside the bed-clothes. He tried with all his might not to think of the life he was leading. The soldier was snoring quietly.

CV

THE wages were paid once a month by the secretary. On pay-day each batch of assistants, coming down from tea, went into the passage and joined the long line of people waiting orderly like the audience in a queue outside a gallery door. One by one they entered the office. The secretary sat at a desk with wooden bowls of money in front of him, and he asked the employé's name; he referred to a book, quickly, after a suspicious glance at the assistant, said aloud the sum due, and taking money out of the bowl counted it into his hand.

"Thank you," he said. "Next."

"Thank you," was the reply.

The assistant passed on to the second secretary and before leaving the room paid him four shillings for washing money, two shillings for the club, and any fines that he might have incurred. With what he had left he went back into his department and there waited till it was time to go. Most of the men in Philip's house were in debt with the woman who sold the sandwiches they generally ate for supper. She was a funny old thing, very fat, with a broad, red face, and black hair plastered neatly on each side of the forehead in the fashion shown in early pictures of Queen Victoria. She always wore a little black bonnet and a white apron; her sleeves were tucked up to the elbow; she cut the sandwiches with large, dirty, greasy hands; and there was grease on her bodice, grease on her apron, grease on her skirt. She was called Mrs. Fletcher, but everyone addressed her as 'Ma;' she was really fond of the shop assistants, whom she called her boys; she never minded giving credit towards the end of the month, and it was known that now and then she had lent someone or other a few shillings when he was in straits. She was a good woman. When they were leaving or when they came back from the holidays, the boys kissed her fat red cheek; and more than one, dismissed and unable to find another job, had got for nothing food to keep body and soul together. The boys were sensible of her large heart and repaid her with genuine affection. There was a story they liked to tell of a man who had done well for himself at Bradford, and had five shops of his own, and had come back after fifteen years and visited Ma Fletcher and given her a gold watch.

Philip found himself with eighteen shillings left out of his month's pay. It was the first money he had ever earned in his life. It gave him none of the pride which might have been expected, but merely a feeling of dismay. The smallness of the sum emphasised the hopelessness of his position. He took fifteen shillings to Mrs. Athelny to pay back part of what he owed her, but she would not take more than half a sovereign.

"D'you know, at that rate it'll take me eight months to settle up with you."

"As long as Athelny's in work I can afford to wait, and who knows, p'raps they'll give you a rise."

Athelny kept on saying that he would speak to the manager about Philip, it was absurd that no use should be made of his talents; but he did nothing, and Philip soon came to the conclusion that the press-agent was not a person of so much importance in the manager's eyes as in his own. Occasionally he saw Athelny in the shop. His flamboyance was extinguished; and in neat, commonplace, shabby clothes he hurried, a subdued, unassuming little man, through the departments as though anxious to escape notice.

"When I think of how I'm wasted there," he said at home, "I'm almost tempted to give in my notice. There's no scope for a man like me. I'm stunted, I'm starved."

Mrs. Athelny, quietly sewing, took no notice of his complaints. Her mouth tightened a little.

"It's very hard to get jobs in these times. It's regular and it's safe; I expect you'll stay there as long as you give satisfaction."

It was evident that Athelny would. It was interesting to see the ascendency which the uneducated woman, bound to him by no legal tie, had acquired over the brilliant, unstable man. Mrs. Athelny treated Philip with motherly kindness now that he was in a different position, and he was touched by her anxiety that he should make a good meal. It was the solace of his life (and when he grew used to it, the monotony of it was what chiefly appalled him) that he could go every Sunday to that friendly house. It was a joy to sit in the stately Spanish chairs and discuss all manner of things with Athelny. Though his condition seemed so desperate he never left him to go back to Harrington Street without a feeling of exultation. At first Philip, in order not to forget what he had learned, tried to go on reading his medical books, but he found it useless; he could not fix his attention on them after the exhausting work of the day; and it seemed hopeless to continue working when he did not know in how long he would be able to go back to the hospital. He dreamed constantly that he was in the wards. The awakening

was painful. The sensation of other people sleeping in the room was inexpressibly irksome to him; he had been used to solitude, and to be with others always, never to be by himself for an instant, was at these moments horrible to him. It was then that he found it most difficult to combat his despair. He saw himself going on with that life, first to the right, second on the left, madam, indefinitely; and having to be thankful if he was not sent away: the men who had gone to the war would be coming home soon, the firm had guaranteed to take them back, and this must mean that others would be sacked; he would have to stir himself even to keep the wretched post he had.

There was only one thing to free him and that was the death of his uncle. He would get a few hundred pounds then, and on this he could finish his course at the hospital. Philip began to wish with all his might for the old man's death. He reckoned out how long he could possibly live; he was well over seventy, Philip did not know his exact age, but he must be at least seventy-five; he suffered from chronic bronchitis and every winter had a bad cough. Though he knew them by heart Philip read over and over again the details in his text-book of medicine of chronic bronchitis in the old. A severe winter might be too much for the old man. With all his heart Philip longed for cold and rain. He thought of it constantly, so that it became a monomania. Uncle William was affected by the great heat too, and in August they had three weeks of sweltering weather. Philip imagined to himself that one day perhaps a telegram would come saying that the Vicar had died suddenly, and he pictured to himself his unutterable relief. As he stood at the top of the stairs and directed people to the departments they wanted, he occupied his mind with thinking incessantly what he would do with the money. He did not know how much it would be, perhaps no more than five hundred pounds, but even that would be enough. He would leave the shop at once, he would not bother to give notice, he would pack his box and go without saying a word to anybody; and then he would return to the hospital. That was the first thing. Would he have forgotten much? In six months he could get it all back, and then he would take his three examinations as soon as he could, midwifery first, then medicine and surgery. The awful fear seized him that his uncle, notwithstanding his promises, might leave everything he had to the parish or the church. The thought made Philip sick. He could not be so cruel. But if that happened Philip was quite determined what to do, he would not go on in that way indefinitely; his life was only tolerable because he could look forward to something better. If he had

no hope he would have no fear. The only brave thing to do then would be to commit suicide, and, thinking this over too, Philip decided minutely what painless drug he would take and how he would get hold of it. It encouraged him to think that, if things became unendurable, he had at all events a way out.

"Second to the right, madam, and down the stairs. First on the left and straight through. Mr. Philips, forward please."

Once a month, for a week, Philip was 'on duty.' He had to go to the department at seven in the morning and keep an eye on the sweepers. When they finished he had to take the sheets off the cases and the models. Then, in the evening when the assistants left, he had to put back the sheets on the models and the cases and 'gang' the sweepers again. It was a dusty, dirty job. He was not allowed to read or write or smoke, but just had to walk about, and the time hung heavily on his hands. When he went off at half past nine he had supper given him, and this was the only consolation; for tea at five o'clock had left him with a healthy appetite, and the bread and cheese, the abundant cocoa, which the firm provided, were welcome.

One day when Philip had been at Lynn's for three months, Mr. Sampson, the buyer, came into the department, fuming with anger. The manager, happening to notice the costume window as he came in, had sent for the buyer and made satirical remarks upon the colour scheme. Forced to submit in silence to his superior's sarcasm, Mr. Sampson took it out of the assistants; and he rated the wretched fellow whose duty it was to dress the window.

"If you want a thing well done you must do it yourself," Mr. Sampson stormed. "I've always said it and I always shall. One can't leave anything to you chaps. Intelligent you call yourselves, do you? Intelligent!"

He threw the word at the assistants as though it were the bitterest term of reproach.

"Don't you know that if you put an electric blue in the window it'll kill all the other blues?"

He looked round the department ferociously, and his eye fell upon Philip.

"You'll dress the window next Friday, Carey. Let's see what you can make of it."

He went into his office, muttering angrily. Philip's heart sank. When Friday morning came he went into the window with a sickening sense of shame. His cheeks were burning. It was horrible to display himself to the passers-by, and though he told himself it was foolish to give way to such a feeling he turned his back to the street.

There was not much chance that any of the students at the hospital would pass along Oxford Street at that hour, and he knew hardly anyone else in London; but as Philip worked, with a huge lump in his throat, he fancied that on turning round he would catch the eye of some man he knew. He made all the haste he could. By the simple observation that all reds went together, and by spacing the costumes more than was usual, Philip got a very good effect; and when the buyer went into the street to look at the result he was obviously pleased.

"I knew I shouldn't go far wrong in putting you on the window. The fact is, you and me are gentlemen, mind you I wouldn't say this in the department, but you and me are gentlemen, and that always tells. It's no good your telling me it doesn't tell, because I know it does tell."

Philip was put on the job regularly, but he could not accustom himself to the publicity; and he dreaded Friday morning, on which the window was dressed, with a terror that made him awake at five o'clock and lie sleepless with sickness in his heart. The girls in the department noticed his shamefaced way, and they very soon discovered his trick of standing with his back to the street. They laughed at him and called him 'sidey.'

"I suppose you're afraid your aunt'll come along and cut you out of her will."

On the whole he got on well enough with the girls. They thought him a little queer; but his club-foot seemed to excuse his not being like the rest, and they found in due course that he was good-natured. He never minded helping anyone, and he was polite and even tempered.

"You can see he's a gentleman," they said.

"Very reserved, isn't he?" said one young woman, to whose passionate enthusiasm for the theatre he had listened unmoved.

Most of them had 'fellers,' and those who hadn't said they had rather than have it supposed that no one had an inclination for them. One or two showed signs of being willing to start a flirtation with Philip, and he watched their manœuvres with grave amusement. He had had enough of love-making for some time; and he was nearly always tired and often hungry.

CVI

Philip avoided the places he had known in happier times. The little gatherings at the tavern in Beak Street were broken up: Macalister, having let down his friends, no longer went there, and Hayward was at the Cape. Only Lawson remained; and Philip, feeling that now the painter and he had nothing in common, did not wish to see him; but one Saturday afternoon, after dinner, having changed his clothes he walked down Regent Street to go to the free library in St. Martin's Lane, meaning to spend the afternoon there, and suddenly found himself face to face with him. His first instinct was to pass on without a word, but Lawson did not give him the opportunity.

"Where on earth have you been all this time?" he cried.

"I?" said Philip.

"I wrote you and asked you to come to the studio for a beano and you never even answered."

"I didn't get your letter."

"No, I know. I went to the hospital to ask for you, and I saw my letter in the rack. Have you chucked the Medical?"

Philip hesitated for a moment. He was ashamed to tell the truth, but the shame he felt angered him, and he forced himself to speak. He could not help reddening.

"Yes, I lost the little money I had. I couldn't afford to go on with it."

"I say, I'm awfully sorry. What are you doing?"

"I'm a shop-walker."

The words choked Philip, but he was determined not to shirk the truth. He kept his eyes on Lawson and saw his embarrassment. Philip smiled savagely

"If you went into Lynn and Sedley, and made your way into the 'made robes' department, you would see me in a frock coat, walking about with a *dégagé* air and directing ladies who want to buy petticoats or stockings. First to the right, madam, and second on the left."

Lawson, seeing that Philip was making a jest of it, laughed awkwardly. He did not know what to say. The picture that Philip called up horrified him, but he was afraid to show his sympathy.

"That's a bit of a change for you," he said.

His words seemed absurd to him, and immediately he wished he had not said them. Philip flushed darkly.

"A bit," he said. "By the way, I owe you five bob."

He put his hand in his pocket and pulled out some silver.

"Oh, it doesn't matter. I'd forgotten all about it."

"Go on, take it."

Lawson received the money silently. They stood in the middle of the pavement, and people jostled them as they passed. There was a sardonic twinkle in Philip's eyes, which made the painter intensely uncomfortable, and he could not tell that Philip's heart was heavy with despair. Lawson wanted dreadfully to do something, but he did not know what to do.

"I say, won't you come to the studio and have a talk?"

"No," said Philip.

"Why not?"

"There's nothing to talk about."

He saw the pain come into Lawson's eyes, he could not help it, he was sorry, but he had to think of himself; he could not bear the thought of discussing his situation, he could endure it only by determining resolutely not to think about it. He was afraid of his weakness if once he began to open his heart. Moreover, he took irresistible dislikes to the places where he had been miserable: he remembered the humiliation he had endured when he had waited in that studio, ravenous with hunger, for Lawson to offer him a meal, and the last occasion when he had taken the five shillings off him. He hated the sight of Lawson, because he recalled those days of utter abasement.

"Then look here, come and dine with me one night. Choose your own evening."

Philip was touched with the painter's kindness. All sorts of people were strangely kind to him, he thought.

"It's awfully good of you, old man, but I'd rather not." He held out his hand. "Good-bye."

Lawson, troubled by a behaviour which seemed inexplicable, took his hand, and Philip quickly limped away. His heart was heavy; and, as was usual with him, he began to reproach himself for what he had done: he did not know what madness of pride had made him refuse the offered friendship. But he heard someone running behind him and presently Lawson's voice calling him; he stopped and suddenly the feeling of hostility got the better of him; he presented to Lawson a cold, set face.

"What is it?"

"I suppose you heard about Hayward, didn't you?"

"I know he went to the Cape."

"He died, you know, soon after landing."

For a moment Philip did not answer. He could hardly believe his ears.

"How?" he asked.

"Oh, enteric. Hard luck, wasn't it? I thought you mightn't know. Gave me a bit of a turn when I heard it."

Lawson nodded quickly and walked away. Philip felt a shiver pass through his heart. He had never before lost a friend of his own age, for the death of Cronshaw, a man so much older than himself, had seemed to come in the normal course of things. The news gave him a peculiar shock. It reminded him of his own mortality, for like everyone else Philip, knowing perfectly that all men must die, had no intimate feeling that the same must apply to himself; and Hayward's death, though he had long ceased to have any warm feeling for him, affected him deeply. He remembered on a sudden all the good talks they had had, and it pained him to think that they would never talk with one another again; he remembered their first meeting and the pleasant months they had spent together in Heidelberg. Philip's heart sank as he thought of the lost years. He walked on mechanically, not noticing where he went, and realised suddenly, with a movement of irritation, that instead of turning down the Haymarket he had sauntered along Shaftesbury Avenue. It bored him to retrace his steps; and besides, with that news, he did not want to read, he wanted to sit alone and think. He made up his mind to go to the British Museum. Solitude was now his only luxury. Since he had been at Lynn's he had often gone there and sat in front of the groups from the Parthenon; and, not deliberately thinking, had allowed their divine masses to rest his troubled soul. But this afternoon they had nothing to say to him, and after a few minutes, impatiently, he wandered out of the room. There were too many people, provincials with foolish faces, foreigners poring over guide-books; their hideousness besmirched the everlasting masterpieces, their restlessness troubled the god's immortal repose. He went into another room and here there was hardly anyone. Philip sat down wearily. His nerves were on edge. He could not get the people out of his mind. Sometimes at Lynn's they affected him in the same way, and he looked at them file past him with horror; they were so ugly and there was such meanness in their faces, it was terrifying; their features were distorted with paltry desires, and you felt they were strange to any ideas of beauty. They had furtive eyes and weak chins. There was no wickedness in them, but only pettiness

and vulgarity. Their humour was a low facetiousness. Sometimes he found himself looking at them to see what animal they resembled, (he tried not to, for it quickly became an obsession,) and he saw in them all the sheep or the horse or the fox or the goat. Human beings filled him with disgust.

But presently the influence of the place descended upon him. He felt quieter. He began to look absently at the tombstones with which the room was lined. They were the work of Athenian stone masons of the fourth and fifth centuries before Christ, and they were very simple, work of no great talent but with the exquisite spirit of Athens upon them; time had mellowed the marble to the colour of honey, so that unconsciously one thought of the bees of Hymettus, and softened their outlines. Some represented a nude figure, seated on a bench, some the departure of the dead from those who loved him, and some the dead clasping hands with one who remained behind. On all was the tragic word farewell; that and nothing more. Their simplicity was infinitely touching. Friend parted from friend, the son from his mother, and the restraint made the survivor's grief more poignant. It was so long, long ago, and century upon century had passed over that unhappiness; for two thousand years those who wept had been dust as those they wept for. Yet the woe was alive still, and it filled Philip's heart so that he felt compassion spring up in it, and he said:

"Poor things, poor things."

And it came to him that the gaping sight-seers and the fat strangers with their guide-books, and all those mean, common people who thronged the shop, with their trivial desires and vulgar cares, were mortal and must die. They too loved and must part from those they loved, the son from his mother, the wife from her husband; and perhaps it was more tragic because their lives were ugly and sordid, and they knew nothing that gave beauty to the world. There was one stone which was very beautiful, a bas relief of two young men holding each other's hand; and the reticence of line, the simplicity, made one like to think that the sculptor here had been touched with a genuine emotion. It was an exquisite memorial to that than which the world offers but one thing more precious, to a friendship; and as Philip looked at it, he felt the tears come to his eyes. He thought of Hayward and his eager admiration for him when first they met, and how disillusion had come and then indifference, till nothing held them together but habit and old memories. It was one of the queer things of life that you saw a person every day for months and were so intimate with him that you

could not imagine existence without him; then separation came, and everything went on in the same way, and the companion who had seemed essential proved unnecessary. Your life proceeded and you did not even miss him. Philip thought of those early days in Heidelberg when Hayward, capable of great things, had been full of enthusiasm for the future, and how, little by little, achieving nothing, he had resigned himself to failure. Now he was dead. His death had been as futile as his life. He died ingloriously, of a stupid disease, failing once more, even at the end, to accomplish anything. It was just the same now as if he had never lived.

Philip asked himself desperately what was the use of living at all. It all seemed inane. It was the same with Cronshaw: it was quite unimportant that he had lived; he was dead and forgotten, his book of poems sold in remainder by second-hand booksellers; his life seemed to have served nothing except to give a pushing journalist occasion to write an article in a review. And Philip cried out in his soul:

"What is the use of it?"

The effort was so incommensurate with the result. The bright hopes of youth had to be paid for at such a bitter price of disillusionment. Pain and disease and unhappiness weighed down the scale so heavily. What did it all mean? He thought of his own life, the high hopes with which he had entered upon it, the limitations which his body forced upon him, his friendlessness, and the lack of affection which had surrounded his youth. He did not know that he had ever done anything but what seemed best to do, and what a cropper he had come! Other men, with no more advantages than he, succeeded, and others again, with many more, failed. It seemed pure chance. The rain fell alike upon the just and upon the unjust, and for nothing was there a why and a wherefore.

Thinking of Cronshaw, Philip remembered the Persian rug which he had given him, telling him that it offered an answer to his question upon the meaning of life; and suddenly the answer occurred to him: he chuckled: now that he had it, it was like one of the puzzles which you worry over till you are shown the solution and then cannot imagine how it could ever have escaped you. The answer was obvious. Life had no meaning. On the earth, satellite of a star speeding through space, living things had arisen under the influence of conditions which were part of the planet's history; and as there had been a beginning of life upon it so, under the influence of other conditions, there would be an end: man, no more significant than other forms of life, had come not as

the climax of creation but as a physical reaction to the environment. Philip remembered the story of the Eastern King who, desiring to know the history of man, was brought by a sage five hundred volumes; busy with affairs of state, he bade him go and condense it; in twenty years the sage returned and his history now was in no more than fifty volumes, but the King, too old then to read so many ponderous tomes, bade him go and shorten it once more; twenty years passed again and the sage, old and gray, brought a single book in which was the knowledge the King had sought; but the King lay on his death-bed, and he had no time to read even that; and then the sage gave him the history of man in a single line; it was this: he was born, he suffered, and he died. There was no meaning in life, and man by living served no end. It was immaterial whether he was born or not born, whether he lived or ceased to live. Life was insignificant and death without consequence. Philip exulted, as he had exulted in his boyhood when the weight of a belief in God was lifted from his shoulders: it seemed to him that the last burden of responsibility was taken from him; and for the first time he was utterly free. His insignificance was turned to power, and he felt himself suddenly equal with the cruel fate which had seemed to persecute him; for, if life was meaningless, the world was robbed of its cruelty. What he did or left undone did not matter. Failure was unimportant and success amounted to nothing. He was the most inconsiderable creature in that swarming mass of mankind which for a brief space occupied the surface of the earth; and he was almighty because he had wrenched from chaos the secret of its nothingness. Thoughts came tumbling over one another in Philip's eager fancy, and he took long breaths of joyous satisfaction. He felt inclined to leap and sing. He had not been so happy for months.

"Oh life," he cried in his heart, "Oh life, where is thy sting?"

For the same uprush of fancy which had shown him with all the force of mathematical demonstration that life had no meaning, brought with it another idea; and that was why Cronshaw, he imagined, had given him the Persian rug. As the weaver elaborated his pattern for no end but the pleasure of his æsthetic sense, so might a man live his life, or if one was forced to believe that his actions were outside his choosing, so might a man look at his life, that it made a pattern. There was as little need to do this as there was use. It was merely something he did for his own pleasure. Out of the manifold events of his life, his deeds, his feelings, his thoughts, he might make a design, regular, elaborate, complicated, or beautiful; and though it might be no more than an illusion that

he had the power of selection, though it might be no more than a fantastic legerdemain in which appearances were interwoven with moonbeams, that did not matter: it seemed, and so to him it was. In the vast warp of life, (a river arising from no spring and flowing endlessly to no sea,) with the background to his fancies that there was no meaning and that nothing was important, a man might get a personal satisfaction in selecting the various strands that worked out the pattern. There was one pattern, the most obvious, perfect, and beautiful, in which a man was born, grew to manhood, married, produced children, toiled for his bread, and died; but there were others, intricate and wonderful, in which happiness did not enter and in which success was not attempted; and in them might be discovered a more troubling grace. Some lives, and Hayward's was among them, the blind indifference of chance cut off while the design was still imperfect; and then the solace was comfortable that it did not matter; other lives, such as Cronshaw's, offered a pattern which was difficult to follow: the point of view had to be shifted and old standards had to be altered before one could understand that such a life was its own justification. Philip thought that in throwing over the desire for happiness he was casting aside the last of his illusions. His life had seemed horrible when it was measured by its happiness, but now he seemed to gather strength as he realised that it might be measured by something else. Happiness mattered as little as pain. They came in, both of them, as all the other details of his life came in, to the elaboration of the design. He seemed for an instant to stand above the accidents of his existence, and he felt that they could not affect him again as they had done before. Whatever happened to him now would be one more motive to add to the complexity of the pattern, and when the end approached he would rejoice in its completion. It would be a work of art, and it would be none the less beautiful because he alone knew of its existence, and with his death it would at once cease to be.

Philip was happy.

CVII

Mr. Sampson, the buyer, took a fancy to Philip. Mr. Sampson was very dashing, and the girls in his department said they would not be surprised if he married one of the rich customers. He lived out of town and often impressed the assistants by putting on his evening clothes in the office. Sometimes he would be seen by those on sweeping duty coming in next morning still dressed, and they would wink gravely to one another while he went into his office and changed into a frock coat. On these occasions, having slipped out for a hurried breakfast, he also would wink at Philip as he walked up the stairs on his way back and rub his hands.

"What a night! What a night!" he said. "My word!"

He told Philip that he was the only gentleman there, and he and Philip were the only fellows who knew what life was. Having said this, he changed his manner suddenly, called Philip Mr. Carey instead of old boy, assumed the importance due to his position as buyer, and put Philip back into his place of shop-walker.

Lynn and Sedley received fashion papers from Paris once a week and adapted the costumes illustrated in them to the needs of their customers. Their *clientèle* was peculiar. The most substantial part consisted of women from the smaller manufacturing towns, who were too elegant to have their frocks made locally and not sufficiently acquainted with London to discover good dressmakers within their means. Beside these, incongruously, was a large number of music-hall artistes. This was a connection that Mr. Sampson had worked up for himself and took great pride in. They had begun by getting their stage-costumes at Lynn's, and he had induced many of them to get their other clothes there as well.

"As good as Paquin and half the price," he said.

He had a persuasive, hail-fellow well-met air with him which appealed to customers of this sort, and they said to one another:

"What's the good of throwing money away when you can get a coat and skirt at Lynn's that nobody knows don't come from Paris?"

Mr. Sampson was very proud of his friendship with the popular favourites whose frocks he made, and when he went out to dinner at two o'clock on Sunday with Miss Victoria Virgo—"she was wearing that powder blue we made her and I lay she didn't let on it

come from us, I 'ad to tell her meself that if I 'adn't designed it with my own 'ands I'd have said it must come from Paquin"—at her beautiful house in Tulse Hill, he regaled the department next day with abundant details. Philip had never paid much attention to women's clothes, but in course of time he began, a little amused at himself, to take a technical interest in them. He had an eye for colour which was more highly trained than that of anyone in the department, and he had kept from his student days in Paris some knowledge of line. Mr. Sampson, an ignorant man conscious of his incompetence, but with a shrewdness that enabled him to combine other people's suggestions, constantly asked the opinion of the assistants in his department in making up new designs; and he had the quickness to see that Philip's criticisms were valuable. But he was very jealous, and would never allow that he took anyone's advice. When he had altered some drawing in accordance with Philip's suggestion, he always finished up by saying:

"Well, it comes round to my own idea in the end."

One day, when Philip had been at the shop for five months, Miss Alice Antonia, the well-known serio-comic, came in and asked to see Mr. Sampson. She was a large woman, with flaxen hair, and a boldly painted face, a metallic voice, and the breezy manner of a comédienne accustomed to be on friendly terms with the gallery boys of provincial music-halls. She had a new song and wished Mr. Sampson to design a costume for her.

"I want something striking," she said. "I don't want any old thing, you know. I want something different from what anybody else has."

Mr. Sampson, bland and familiar, said he was quite certain they could get her the very thing she required. He showed her sketches.

"I know there's nothing here that would do, but I just want to show you the kind of thing I would suggest."

"Oh no, that's not the sort of thing at all," she said, as she glanced at them impatiently. "What I want is something that'll just hit 'em in the jaw and make their front teeth rattle."

"Yes, I quite understand, Miss Antonia," said the buyer, with a bland smile, but his eyes grew blank and stupid.

"I expect I shall 'ave to pop over to Paris for it in the end."

"Oh, I think we can give you satisfaction, Miss Antonia. What you can get in Paris you can get here."

When she had swept out of the department Mr. Sampson, a little worried, discussed the matter with Mrs. Hodges.

"She's a caution and no mistake," said Mrs. Hodges.

"Alice, where art thou?" remarked the buyer, irritably, and thought he had scored a point against her.

His ideas of music-hall costumes had never gone beyond short skirts, a swirl of lace, and glittering sequins; but Miss Antonia had expressed herself on that subject in no uncertain terms.

"Oh, my aunt!" she said.

And the invocation was uttered in such a tone as to indicate a rooted antipathy to anything so commonplace, even if she had not added that sequins gave her the sick. Mr. Sampson 'got out' one or two ideas, but Mrs. Hodges told him frankly she did not think they would do. It was she who gave Philip the suggestion:

"Can you draw, Phil? Why don't you try your 'and and see wha you can do?"

Philip bought a cheap box of water colours, and in the evening while Bell, the noisy lad of sixteen, whistling three notes, busied himself with his stamps, he made one or two sketches. He remembered some of the costumes he had seen in Paris, and he adapted one of them, getting his effect from a combination of violent, unusual colours. The result amused him and next morning he showed it to Mrs. Hodges. She was somewhat astonished, but took it at once to the buyer.

"It's unusual," he said, "there's no denying that."

It puzzled him, and at the same time his trained eye saw that it would make up admirably. To save his face he began making suggestions for altering it, but Mrs. Hodges, with more sense, advised him to show it to Miss Antonia as it was.

"It's neck or nothing with her, and she may take a fancy to it."

"It's a good deal more nothing than neck," said Mr. Sampson, looking at the *décolletage*. "He can draw, can't he? Fancy 'im keeping it dark all this time."

When Miss Antonia was announced, the buyer placed the design on the table in such a position that it must catch her eye the moment she was shown into his office. She pounced on it at once.

"What's that?" she said. "Why can't I 'ave that?"

"That's just an idea we got out for you," said Mr. Sampson casually. "D'you like it?"

"Do I like it!" she said. "Give me 'alf a pint with a little drop of gin in it."

"Ah, you see, you don't have to go to Paris. You've only got to say what you want and there you are."

The work was put in hand at once, and Philip felt quite a thrill of satisfaction when he saw the costume completed. The buyer and Mrs. Hodges took all the credit of it; but he did not care, and when

he went with them to the Tivoli to see Miss Antonia wear it for the first time he was filled with elation. In answer to her questions he at last told Mrs. Hodges how he had learnt to draw—fearing that the people he lived with would think he wanted to put on airs, he had always taken the greatest care to say nothing about his past occupations—and she repeated the information to Mr. Sampson. The buyer said nothing to him on the subject, but began to treat him a little more deferentially and presently gave him designs to do for two of the country customers. They met with satisfaction. Then he began to speak to his clients of a "clever young feller, Paris art-student, you know" who worked for him; and soon Philip, ensconced behind a screen, in his shirt-sleeves, was drawing from morning till night. Sometimes he was so busy that he had to dine at three with the 'stragglers.' He liked it, because there were few of them and they were all too tired to talk; the food also was better, for it consisted of what was left over from the buyers' table. Philip's rise from shop-walker to designer of costumes had a great effect on the department. He realised that he was an object of envy. Harris, the assistant with the queer-shaped head, who was the first person he had known at the shop and had attached himself to Philip, could not conceal his bitterness.

"Some people 'ave all the luck," he said. "You'll be a buyer yourself one of these days, and we shall all be calling you sir."

He told Philip that he should demand higher wages, for notwithstanding the difficult work he was now engaged in, he received no more than the six shillings a week with which he started. But it was a ticklish matter to ask for a rise. The manager had a sardonic way of dealing with such applicants.

"Think you're worth more, do you? How much d'you think you're worth, eh?"

The assistant, with his heart in his mouth, would suggest that he thought he ought to have another two shillings a week.

"Oh, very well, if you think you're worth it. You can 'ave it." Then he paused and sometimes, with a steely eye, added: "And you can 'ave your notice too."

It was no use then to withdraw your request, you had to go. The manager's idea was that assistants who were dissatisfied did not work properly, and if they were not worth a rise it was better to sack them at once. The result was that they never asked for one unless they were prepared to leave. Philip hesitated. He was a little suspicious of the men in his room who told him that the buyer could not do without him. They were decent fellows, but their sense of humour was primitive, and it would have seemed

funny to them if they had persuaded Philip to ask for more wages and he were sacked. He could not forget the mortification he had suffered in looking for work, he did not wish to expose himself to that again, and he knew there was small chance of his getting elsewhere a post as designer: there were hundreds of people about who could draw as well as he. But he wanted money very badly; his clothes were worn out, and the heavy carpets rotted his socks and boots; he had almost persuaded himself to take the venturesome step when one morning, passing up from breakfast in the basement through the passage that led to the manager's office, he saw a queue of men waiting in answer to an advertisement. There were about a hundred of them, and whichever was engaged would be offered his keep and the same six shillings a week that Philip had. He saw some of them cast envious glances at him because he had employment. It made him shudder. He dared not risk it.

CVIII

THE winter passed. Now and then Philip went to the hospital, slinking in when it was late and there was little chance of meeting anyone he knew, to see whether there were letters for him. At Easter he received one from his uncle. He was surprised to hear from him, for the Vicar of Blackstable had never written him more than half a dozen letters in his whole life, and they were on business matters.

Dear Philip,

If you are thinking of taking a holiday soon and care to come down here I shall be pleased to see you. I was very ill with my bronchitis in the winter and Doctor Wigram never expected me to pull through. I have a wonderful constitution and I made, thank God, a marvellous recovery.

Yours affectionately,

William Carey.

The letter made Philip angry. How did his uncle think he was living? He did not even trouble to inquire. He might have starved for all the old man cared. But as he walked home something struck him; he stopped under a lamp-post and read the letter again; the handwriting had no longer the business-like firmness which had characterised it; it was larger and wavering: perhaps the illness had shaken him more than he was willing to confess, and he sought in that formal note to express a yearning to see the only relation he had in the world. Philip wrote back that he could come down to Blackstable for a fortnight in July. The invitation was convenient, for he had not known what to do with his brief holiday. The Athelnys went hopping in September, but he could not then be spared, since during that month the autumn models were prepared. The rule of Lynn's was that everyone must take a fortnight whether he wanted it or not; and during that time, if he had nowhere to go, the assistant might sleep in his room, but he was not allowed food. A number had no friends within reasonable distance of London, and to these the holiday was an awkward interval when they had to provide food out of their small wages and, with the whole day on their hands, had nothing to spend.

Philip had not been out of London since his visit to Brighton with Mildred, now two years before, and he longed for fresh air and the silence of the sea. He thought of it with such a passionate desire, all through May and June, that, when at length the time came for him to go, he was listless.

On his last evening, when he talked with the buyer of one or two jobs he had to leave over, Mr. Sampson suddenly said to him:

"What wages have you been getting?"

"Six shillings."

"I don't think it's enough. I'll see that you're put up to twelve when you come back."

"Thank you very much," smiled Philip. "I'm beginning to want some new clothes badly."

"If you stick to your work and don't go larking about with the girls like what some of them do, I'll look after you, Carey. Mind you, you've got a lot to learn, but you're promising, I'll say that for you, you're promising, and I'll see that you get a pound a week as soon as you deserve it."

Philip wondered how long he would have to wait for that. Two years?

He was startled at the change in his uncle. When last he had seen him he was a stout man who held himself upright, clean-shaven, with a round, sensual face; but he had fallen in strangely, his skin was yellow; there were great bags under the eyes, and he was bent and old. He had grown a beard during his last illness, and he walked very slowly.

"I'm not at my best today," he said when Philip, having just arrived, was sitting with him in the dining-room. "The heat upsets me."

Philip, asking after the affairs of the parish, looked at him and wondered how much longer he could last. A hot summer would finish him; Philip noticed how thin his hands were; they trembled. It meant so much to Philip. If he died that summer he could go back to the hospital at the beginning of the winter session; his heart leaped at the thought of returning no more to Lynn's. At dinner the Vicar sat humped up on his chair, and the housekeeper who had been with him since his wife's death said:

"Shall Mr. Philip carve, sir?"

The old man, who had been about to do so from disinclination to confess his weakness, seemed glad at the first suggestion to relinquish the attempt.

"You've got a very good appetite," said Philip.

"Oh yes, I always eat well. But I'm thinner than when you were

here last. I'm glad to be thinner, I didn't like being so fat. Dr. Wigram thinks I'm all the better for being thinner than I was."

When dinner was over the housekeeper brought him some medicine.

"Show the prescription to Master Philip," he said. "He's a doctor too. I'd like him to see that he thinks it's all right. I told Dr. Wigram that now you're studying to be a doctor he ought to make a reduction in his charges. It's dreadful the bills I've had to pay. He came every day for two months, and he charges five shillings a visit. It's a lot of money, isn't it? He comes twice a week still. I'm going to tell him he needn't come any more. I'll send for him if I want him."

He looked at Philip eagerly while he read the prescriptions. They were narcotics. There were two of them, and one was a medicine which the Vicar explained he was to use only if his neuritis grew unendurable.

"I'm very careful," he said. "I don't want to get into the opium habit."

He did not mention his nephew's affairs. Philip fancied that it was by way of precaution, in case he asked for money, that his uncle kept dwelling on the financial calls upon him. He had spent so much on the doctor and so much more on the chemist, while he was ill they had had to have a fire every day in his bed-room, and now on Sunday he needed a carriage to go to church in the evening as well as in the morning. Philip felt angrily inclined to say he need not be afraid, he was not going to borrow from him, but he held his tongue. It seemed to him that everything had left the old man now but two things, pleasure in his food and a grasping desire for money. It was a hideous old age.

In the afternoon Dr. Wigram came, and after the visit Philip walked with him to the garden gate.

"How d'you think he is?" said Philip.

Dr. Wigram was more anxious not to do wrong than to do right, and he never hazarded a definite opinion if he could help it. He had practised at Blackstable for five-and-thirty years. He had the reputation of being very safe, and many of his patients thought it much better that a doctor should be safe than clever. There was a new man at Blackstable—he had been settled there for ten years, but they still looked upon him as an interloper—and he was said to be very clever; but he had not much practice among the better people, because no one really knew anything about him.

"Oh, he's as well as can be expected," said Dr. Wigram in answer to Philip's inquiry.

"Has he got anything seriously the matter with him?"

"Well, Philip, your uncle is no longer a young man," said the doctor with a cautious little smile, which suggested that after all the Vicar of Blackstable was not an old man either.

"He seems to think his heart's in a bad way."

"I'm not satisfied with his heart," hazarded the doctor, "I think he should be careful, very careful."

On the tip of Philip's tongue was the question: how much longer can he live? He was afraid it would shock. In these matters a periphrase was demanded by the decorum of life, but, as he asked another question instead, it flashed through him that the doctor must be accustomed to the impatience of a sick man's relatives. He must see through their sympathetic expressions. Philip, with a faint smile at his own hypocrisy, cast down his eyes.

"I suppose he's in no immediate danger?"

This was the kind of question the doctor hated. If you said a patient couldn't live another month the family prepared itself for a bereavement, and if then the patient lived on they visited the medical attendant with the resentment they felt at having tormented themselves before it was necessary. On the other hand, if you said the patient might live a year and he died in a week the family said you did not know your business. They thought of all the affection they would have lavished on the defunct if they had known the end was so near. Dr. Wigram made the gesture of washing his hands.

"I don't think there's any grave risk so long as he—remains as he is," he ventured at last. "But on the other hand, we mustn't forget that he's no longer a young man, and well, the machine is wearing out. If he gets over the hot weather I don't see why he shouldn't get on very comfortably till the winter, and then if the winter does not bother him too much, well, I don't see why anything should happen."

Philip went back to the dining-room where his uncle was sitting. With his skull-cap and a crochet shawl over his shoulders he looked grotesque. His eyes had been fixed on the door, and they rested on Philip's face as he entered. Philip saw that his uncle had been waiting anxiously for his return.

"Well, what did he say about me?"

Philip understood suddenly that the old man was frightened of dying. It made Philip a little ashamed, so that he looked away involuntarily. He was always embarrassed by the weakness of human nature.

"He says he thinks you're much better," said Philip.

A gleam of delight came into his uncle's eyes.

"I've got a wonderful constitution," he said. "What else did he say?" he added suspiciously.

Philip smiled.

"He said that if you take care of yourself there's no reason why you shouldn't live to be a hundred."

"I don't know that I can expect to do that, but I don't see why I shouldn't see eighty. My mother lived till she was eighty-four."

There was a little table by the side of Mr. Carey's chair, and on it were a Bible and the large volume of the Common Prayer from which for so many years he had been accustomed to read to his household. He stretched out now his shaking hand and took his Bible.

"Those old patriarchs lived to a jolly good old age, didn't they?" he said, with a queer little laugh in which Philip read a sort of timid appeal.

The old man clung to life. Yet he believed implicitly all that his religion taught him. He had no doubt in the immortality of the soul, and he felt that he had conducted himself well enough, according to his capacities, to make it very likely that he would go to heaven. In his long career to how many dying persons must he have administered the consolations of religion! Perhaps he was like the doctor who could get no benefit from his own prescriptions. Philip was puzzled and shocked by that eager cleaving to the earth. He wondered what nameless horror was at the back of the old man's mind. He would have liked to probe into his soul so that he might see in its nakedness the dreadful dismay of the unknown which he suspected.

The fortnight passed quickly and Philip returned to London. He passed a sweltering August behind his screen in the costumes department, drawing in his shirt-sleeves. The assistants in relays went for their holidays. In the evening Philip generally went into Hyde Park and listened to the band. Growing more accustomed to his work it tired him less, and his mind, recovering from its long stagnation, sought for fresh activity. His whole desire now was set on his uncle's death. He kept on dreaming the same dream: a telegram was handed to him one morning, early, which announced the Vicar's sudden demise, and freedom was in his grasp. When he awoke and found it was nothing but a dream he was filled with sombre rage. He occupied himself, now that the event seemed likely to happen at any time, with elaborate plans for the future. In these he passed rapidly over the year which he must spend before it was possible for him to be qualified and dwelt on

the journey to Spain on which his heart was set. He read books about that country, which he borrowed from the free library, and already he knew from photographs exactly what each city looked like. He saw himself lingering in Cordova on the bridge that spanned the Guadalquivir; he wandered through tortuous streets in Toledo and sat in churches where he wrung from El Greco the secret which he felt the mysterious painter held for him. Athelny entered into his humour, and on Sunday afternoons they made out elaborate itineraries so that Philip should miss nothing that was noteworthy. To cheat his impatience Philip began to teach himself Spanish, and in the deserted sitting-room in Harrington Street he spent an hour every evening doing Spanish exercises and puzzling out with an English translation by his side the magnificent phrases of Don Quixote. Athelny gave him a lesson once a week, and Philip learned a few sentences to help him on his journey. Mrs. Athelny laughed at them.

"You two and your Spanish!" she said. "Why don't you do something useful?"

But Sally, who was growing up and was to put up her hair at Christmas, stood by sometimes and listened in her grave way while her father and Philip exchanged remarks in a language she did not understand. She thought her father the most wonderful man who had ever existed, and she expressed her opinion of Philip only through her father's commendations.

"Father thinks a rare lot of your Uncle Philip," she remarked to her brothers and sisters.

Thorpe, the eldest boy, was old enough to go on the Arethusa, and Athelny regaled his family with magnificent descriptions of the appearance the lad would make when he came back in uniform for his holidays. As soon as Sally was seventeen she was to be apprenticed to a dressmaker. Athelny in his rhetorical way talked of the birds, strong enough to fly now, who were leaving the parental nest, and with tears in his eyes told them that the nest would be there still if ever they wished to return to it. A shake-down and a dinner would always be theirs, and the heart of a father would never be closed to the troubles of his children.

"You do talk, Athelny," said his wife. "I don't know what trouble they're likely to get into so long as they're steady. So long as you're honest and not afraid of work you'll never be out of a job, that's what I think, and I can tell you I shan't be sorry when I see the last of them earning their own living."

Child-bearing, hard work, and constant anxiety were beginning to tell on Mrs. Athelny; and sometimes her back ached in the even-

ing so that she had to sit down and rest herself. Her ideal of happiness was to have a girl to do the rough work so that she need not herself get up before seven. Athelny waved his beautiful white hand.

"Ah, my Betty, we've deserved well of the state, you and I. We've reared nine healthy children, and the boys shall serve their king; the girls shall cook and sew and in their turn breed healthy children." He turned to Sally, and to comfort her for the anticlimax of the contrast added grandiloquently: "They also serve who only stand and wait."

Athelny had lately added socialism to the other contradictory theories he vehemently believed in, and he stated now:

"In a socialist state we should be richly pensioned, you and I, Betty."

"Oh, don't talk to me about your socialists, I've got no patience with them," she cried. "It only means that another lot of lazy loafers will make a good thing out of the working classes. My motto is, leave me alone; I don't want anyone interfering with me; I'll make the best of a bad job, and the devil take the hindmost."

"D'you call life a bad job?" said Athelny. "Never! We've had our ups and downs, we've had our struggles, we've always been poor, but it's been worth it, ay, worth it a hundred times I say when I look round at my children."

"You do talk, Athelny," she said, looking at him, not with anger but with scornful calm. "You've had the pleasant part of the children, I've had the bearing of them, and the bearing with them. I don't say that I'm not fond of them, now they're there, but if I had my time over again I'd remain single. Why, if I'd remained single I might have a little shop by now, and four or five hundred pounds in the bank, and a girl to do the rough work. Oh, I wouldn't go over my life again, not for something."

Philip thought of the countless millions to whom life is no more than unending labour, neither beautiful nor ugly, but just to be accepted in the same spirit as one accepts the changes of the seasons. Fury seized him because it all seemed useless. He could not reconcile himself to the belief that life had no meaning and yet everything he saw, all his thoughts, added to the force of his conviction. But though fury seized him it was a joyful fury. Life was not so horrible if it was meaningless, and he faced it with a strange sense of power.

CIX

THE autumn passed into winter. Philip had left his address with Mrs. Foster, his uncle's housekeeper, so that she might communicate with him, but still went once a week to the hospital on the chance of there being a letter. One evening he saw his name on an envelope in a handwriting he had hoped never to see again. It gave him a queer feeling. For a little while he could not bring himself to take it. It brought back a host of hateful memories. But at length, impatient with himself, he ripped open the envelope.

7 William Street,
Fitzroy Square.

Dear Phil,

Can I see you for a minute or two as soon as possible. I am in awful trouble and don't know what to do. It's not money.

Yours truly,
Mildred.

He tore the letter into little bits and going out into the street scattered them in the darkness.

"I'll see her damned," he muttered.

A feeling of disgust surged up in him at the thought of seeing her again. He did not care if she was in distress, it served her right whatever it was, he thought of her with hatred, and the love he had had for her aroused his loathing. His recollections filled him with nausea, and as he walked across the Thames he drew himself aside in an instinctive withdrawal from his thought of her. He went to bed, but he could not sleep; he wondered what was the matter with her, and he could not get out of his head the fear that she was ill and hungry; she would not have written to him unless she were desperate. He was angry with himself for his weakness, but he knew that he would have no peace unless he saw her. Next morning he wrote a letter-card and posted it on his way to the shop. He made it as stiff as he could and said merely that he was sorry she was in difficulties and would come to the address she had given at seven o'clock that evening.

It was that of a shabby lodging-house in a sordid street; and when, sick at the thought of seeing her, he asked whether she was

in, a wild hope seized him that she had left. It looked the sort of place people moved in and out of frequently. He had not thought of looking at the postmark on her letter and did not know how many days it had lain in the rack. The woman who answered the bell did not reply to his inquiry, but silently preceded him along the passage and knocked on a door at the back.

"Mrs. Miller, a gentleman to see you," she called.

The door was slightly opened, and Mildred looked out suspiciously.

"Oh, it's you," she said. "Come in."

He walked in and she closed the door. It was a very small bedroom, untidy as was every place she lived in; there was a pair of shoes on the floor, lying apart from one another and uncleaned; a hat was on the chest of drawers, with false curls beside it; and there was a blouse on the table. Philip looked for somewhere to put his hat. The hooks behind the door were laden with skirts, and he noticed that they were muddy at the hem.

"Sit down, won't you?" she said. Then she gave a little awkward laugh. "I suppose you were surprised to hear from me again."

"You're awfully hoarse," he answered. "Have you got a sore throat?"

"Yes, I have had for some time."

He did not say anything. He waited for her to explain why she wanted to see him. The look of the room told him clearly enough that she had gone back to the life from which he had taken her. He wondered what had happened to the baby; there was a photograph of it on the chimney-piece, but no sign in the room that a child was ever there. Mildred was holding her handkerchief. She made it into a little ball, and passed it from hand to hand. He saw that she was very nervous. She was staring at the fire, and he could look at her without meeting her eyes. She was much thinner than when she had left him; and the skin, yellow and dryish, was drawn more tightly over her cheek-bones. She had dyed her hair and it was now flaxen: it altered her a good deal, and made her look more vulgar.

"I was relieved to get your letter, I can tell you," she said at last. "I thought p'raps you weren't at the 'ospital any more."

Philip did not speak.

"I suppose you're qualified by now, aren't you?"

"No."

"How's that?"

"I'm no longer at the hospital. I had to give it up eighteen months ago."

"You are changeable. You don't seem as if you could stick to anything."

Philip was silent for another moment, and when he went on it was with coldness.

"I lost the little money I had in an unlucky speculation and I couldn't afford to go on with the medical. I had to earn my living as best I could."

"What are you doing then?"

"I'm in a shop."

"Oh!"

She gave him a quick glance and turned her eyes away at once. He thought that she reddened. She dabbed her palms nervously with the handkerchief.

"You've not forgotten all your doctoring, have you?" She jerked the words out quite oddly.

"Not entirely."

"Because that's why I wanted to see you." Her voice sank to a hoarse whisper. "I don't know what's the matter with me."

"Why don't you go to a hospital?"

"I don't like to do that, and have all the stoodents staring at me, and I'm afraid they'd want to keep me."

"What are you complaining of?" asked Philip coldly, with the stereotyped phrase used in the out-patients' room.

"Well, I've come out in a rash, and I can't get rid of it."

Philip felt a twinge of horror in his heart. Sweat broke out on his forehead.

"Let me look at your throat?"

He took her over to the window and made such examination as he could. Suddenly he caught sight of her eyes. There was deadly fear in them. It was horrible to see. She was terrified. She wanted him to reassure her; she looked at him pleadingly, not daring to ask for words of comfort but with all her nerves astrung to receive them: he had none to offer her.

"I'm afraid you're very ill indeed," he said.

"What d'you think it is?"

When he told her she grew deathly pale, and her lips even turned yellow; she began to cry, hopelessly, quietly at first and then with choking sobs.

"I'm awfully sorry," he said at last. "But I had to tell you."

"I may just as well kill myself and have done with it."

He took no notice of the threat.

"Have you got any money?" he asked.

"Six or seven pounds."

"You must give up this life, you know. Don't you think you could find some work to do? I'm afraid I can't help you much, I only get twelve bob a week."

"What is there I can do now?" she cried impatiently.

"Damn it all, you *must* try to get something."

He spoke to her very gravely, telling her of her own danger and the danger to which she exposed others, and she listened sullenly. He tried to console her. At last he brought her to a sulky acquiescence in which she promised to do all he advised. He wrote a prescription, which he said he would leave at the nearest chemist's, and he impressed upon her the necessity of taking her medicine with the utmost regularity. Getting up to go, he held out his hand.

"Don't be downhearted, you'll soon get over your throat."

But as he went her face became suddenly distorted, and she caught hold of his coat.

"Oh, don't leave me," she cried hoarsely. "I'm so afraid, don't leave me alone yet. Phil, please. There's no one else I can go to, you're the only friend I've ever had."

He felt the terror of her soul, and it was strangely like that terror he had seen in his uncle's eyes when he feared that he might die. Philip looked down. Twice that woman had come into his life and made him wretched; she had no claim upon him; and yet, he knew not why, deep in his heart was a strange aching; it was that which, when he received her letter, had left him no peace till he obeyed her summons.

"I suppose I shall never really quite get over it," he said to himself.

What perplexed him was that he felt a curious physical distaste, which made it uncomfortable for him to be near her.

"What do you want me to do?" he asked.

"Let's go out and dine together. I'll pay."

He hesitated. He felt that she was creeping back again into his life when he thought she was gone out of it for ever. She watched him with sickening anxiety.

"Oh, I know I've treated you shocking, but don't leave me alone now. You've had your revenge. If you leave me by myself now I don't know what I shall do."

"All right, I don't mind," he said, "but we shall have to do it on the cheap, I haven't got money to throw away these days."

She sat down and put her shoes on, then changed her skirt and

put on a hat; and they walked out together till they found a restaurant in the Tottenham Court Road. Philip had got out of the habit of eating at those hours, and Mildred's throat was so sore that she could not swallow. They had a little cold ham and Philip drank a glass of beer. They sat opposite one another, as they had so often sat before; he wondered if she remembered; they had nothing to say to one another and would have sat in silence if Philip had not forced himself to talk. In the bright light of the restaurant, with its vulgar looking-glasses that reflected in an endless series, she looked old and haggard. Philip was anxious to know about the child, but he had not the courage to ask. At last she said:

"You know baby died last summer."

"Oh!" he said.

"You might say you're sorry."

"I'm not," he answered, "I'm very glad."

She glanced at him and, understanding what he meant, looked away.

"You were rare stuck on it at one time, weren't you? I always thought it funny like how you could see so much in another man's child."

When they had finished eating they called at the chemist's for the medicine Philip had ordered, and going back to the shabby room he made her take a dose. Then they sat together till it was time for Philip to go back to Harrington Street. He was hideously bored.

Philip went to see her every day. She took the medicine he had prescribed and followed his directions, and soon the results were so apparent that she gained the greatest confidence in Philip's skill. As she grew better she grew less despondent. She talked more freely.

"As soon as I can get a job I shall be all right," she said. "I've had my lesson now and I mean to profit by it. No more racketing about for yours truly."

Each time he saw her, Philip asked whether she had found work. She told him not to worry, she would find something to do as soon as she wanted it; she had several strings to her bow; it was all the better not to do anything for a week or two. He could not deny this, but at the end of that time he became more insistent. She laughed at him, she was much more cheerful now, and said he was a fussy old thing. She told him long stories of the manageresses she interviewed, for her idea was to get work at some eating-house; what they said and what she answered. Nothing definite was fixed,

but she was sure to settle something at the beginning of the following week: there was no use hurrying, and it would be a mistake to take something unsuitable.

"It's absurd to talk like that," he said impatiently. "You must take anything you can get. I can't help you, and your money won't last for ever."

"Oh, well, I've not come to the end of it yet and chance it."

He looked at her sharply. It was three weeks since his first visit, and she had then less than seven pounds. Suspicion seized him. He remembered some of the things she had said. He put two and two together. He wondered whether she had made any attempt to find work. Perhaps she had been lying to him all the time. It was very strange that her money should have lasted so long.

"What is your rent here?"

"Oh, the landlady's very nice, different from what some of them are; she's quite willing to wait till it's convenient for me to pay."

He was silent. What he suspected was so horrible that he hesitated. It was no use to ask her, she would deny everything; if he wanted to know he must find out for himself. He was in the habit of leaving her every evening at eight, and when the clock struck he got up; but instead of going back to Harrington Street he stationed himself at the corner of Fitzroy Square so that he could see anyone who came along William Street. It seemed to him that he waited an interminable time, and he was on the point of going away, thinking his surmise had been mistaken, when the door of No. 7 opened and Mildred came out. He fell back into the darkness and watched her walk towards him. She had on the hat with a quantity of feathers on it which he had seen in her room, and she wore a dress he recognised, too showy for the street and unsuitable to the time of year. He followed her slowly till she came into the Tottenham Court Road, where she slackened her pace; at the corner of Oxford Street she stopped, looked round, and crossed over to a music-hall. He went up to her and touched her on the arm. He saw that she had rouged her cheeks and painted her lips.

"Where are you going, Mildred?"

She started at the sound of his voice and reddened as she always did when she was caught in a lie; then the flash of anger which he knew so well came into her eyes as she instinctively sought to defend herself by abuse. But she did not say the words which were on the tip of her tongue.

"Oh, I was only going to see the show. It gives me the hump sitting every night by myself."

He did not pretend to believe her.

"You mustn't. Good heavens, I've told you fifty times how dangerous it is. You must stop this sort of thing at once."

"Oh, hold your jaw," she cried roughly. "How d'you suppose I'm going to live?"

He took hold of her arm and without thinking what he was doing tried to drag her away.

"For God's sake come along. Let me take you home. You don't know what you're doing. It's criminal."

"What do I care? Let them take their chance. Men haven't been so good to me that I need bother my head about them."

She pushed him away and walking up to the box-office put down her money. Philip had threepence in his pocket. He could not follow. He turned away and walked slowly down Oxford Street.

"I can't do anything more," he said to himself.

That was the end. He did not see her again.

CX

CHRISTMAS that year falling on Thursday, the shop was to close for four days: Philip wrote to his uncle asking whether it would be convenient for him to spend the holidays at the vicarage. He received an answer from Mrs. Foster, saying that Mr. Carey was not well enough to write himself, but wished to see his nephew and would be glad if he came down. She met Philip at the door, and when she shook hands with him, said:

"You'll find him changed since you was here last, sir; but you'll pretend you don't notice anything, won't you, sir? He's that nervous about himself."

Philip nodded, and she led him into the dining-room.

"Here's Mr. Philip, sir."

The Vicar of Blackstable was a dying man. There was no mistaking that when you looked at the hollow cheeks and the shrunken body. He sat huddled in the arm-chair, with his head strangely thrown back, and a shawl over his shoulders. He could not walk now without the help of sticks, and his hands trembled so that he could only feed himself with difficulty.

"He can't last long now," thought Philip, as he looked at him.

"How d'you think I'm looking?" asked the Vicar. "D'you think I've changed since you were here last?"

"I think you look stronger than you did last summer."

"It was the heat. That always upsets me."

Mr. Carey's history of the last few months consisted in the number of weeks he had spent in his bed-room and the number of weeks he had spent downstairs. He had a hand-bell by his side and while he talked he rang it for Mrs. Foster, who sat in the next room ready to attend to his wants, to ask on what day of the month he had first left his room.

"On the seventh of November, sir."

Mr. Carey looked at Philip to see how he took the information.

"But I eat well still, don't I, Mrs. Foster?"

"Yes, sir, you've got a wonderful appetite."

"I don't seem to put on flesh though."

Nothing interested him now but his health. He was set upon one thing indomitably and that was living, just living, notwithstanding the monotony of his life and the constant pain which al-

lowed him to sleep only when he was under the influence of morphia.

"It's terrible, the amount of money I have to spend on doctor's bills." He tinkled his bell again. "Mrs. Foster, show Master Philip the chemist's bill."

Patiently she took it off the chimney-piece and handed it to Philip.

"That's only one month. I was wondering if as you're doctoring yourself you couldn't get me the drugs cheaper. I thought of getting them down from the stores, but then there's the postage."

Though apparently taking so little interest in him that he did not trouble to inquire what Philip was doing, he seemed glad to have him there. He asked how long he could stay, and when Philip told him he must leave on Tuesday morning, expressed a wish that the visit might have been longer. He told him minutely all his symptoms and repeated what the doctor had said of him. He broke off to ring his bell, and when Mrs. Foster came in, said:

"Oh, I wasn't sure if you were there. I only rang to see if you were."

When she had gone he explained to Philip that it made him uneasy if he was not certain that Mrs. Foster was within earshot; she knew exactly what to do with him if anything happened. Philip, seeing that she was tired and that her eyes were heavy from want of sleep, suggested that he was working her too hard.

"Oh, nonsense," said the Vicar, "she's as strong as a horse." And when next she came in to give him his medicine he said to her:

"Master Philip says you've got too much to do, Mrs. Foster. You like looking after me, don't you?"

"Oh, I don't mind, sir. I want to do everything I can."

Presently the medicine took effect and Mr. Carey fell asleep. Philip went into the kitchen and asked Mrs. Foster whether she could stand the work. He saw that for some months she had had little peace.

"Well, sir, what can I do?" she answered. "The poor old gentleman's so dependent on me, and, although he is troublesome sometimes, you can't help liking him, can you? I've been here so many years now, I don't know what I shall do when he comes to go."

Philip saw that she was really fond of the old man. She washed and dressed him, gave him his food, and was up half a dozen times in the night; for she slept in the next room to his and whenever he awoke he tinkled his little bell till she came in. He might die at any moment, but he might live for months. It was wonderful that she should look after a stranger with such patient tenderness, and

it was tragic and pitiful that she should be alone in the world to care for him.

It seemed to Philip that the religion which his uncle had preached all his life was now of no more than formal importance to him: every Sunday the curate came and administered to him Holy Communion, and he often read his Bible; but it was clear that he looked upon death with horror. He believed that it was the gateway to life everlasting, but he did not want to enter upon that life. In constant pain, chained to his chair and having given up the hope of ever getting out into the open again, like a child in the hands of a woman to whom he paid wages, he clung to the world he knew.

In Philip's head was a question he could not ask, because he was aware that his uncle would never give any but a conventional answer: he wondered whether at the very end, now that the machine was painfully wearing itself out, the clergyman still believed in immortality; perhaps at the bottom of his soul, not allowed to shape itself into words in case it became urgent, was the conviction that there was no God and after this life nothing.

On the evening of Boxing Day Philip sat in the dining-room with his uncle. He had to start very early next morning in order to get to the shop by nine, and he was to say good-night to Mr. Carey then. The Vicar of Blackstable was dozing and Philip, lying on the sofa by the window, let his book fall on his knees and looked idly round the room. He asked himself how much the furniture would fetch. He had walked round the house and looked at the things he had known from his childhood; there were a few pieces of china which might go for a decent price and Philip wondered if it would be worth while to take them up to London; but the furniture was of the Victorian order, of mahogany, solid and ugly; it would go for nothing at an auction. There were three or four thousand books, but everyone knew how badly they sold, and it was not probable that they would fetch more than a hundred pounds. Philip did not know how much his uncle would leave, and he reckoned out for the hundredth time what was the least sum upon which he could finish the curriculum at the hospital, take his degree, and live during the time he wished to spend on hospital appointments. He looked at the old man, sleeping restlessly: there was no humanity left in that shrivelled face; it was the face of some queer animal. Philip thought how easy it would be to finish that useless life. He had thought it each evening when Mrs. Foster prepared for his uncle the medicine which was to give him an easy night. There were two bottles: one contained a drug which he took regularly, and the other an opiate if the pain grew unendurable. This was

poured out for him and left by his bed-side. He generally took it at three or four in the morning. It would be a simple thing to double the dose; he would die in the night, and no one would suspect anything; for that was how Doctor Wigram expected him to die. The end would be painless. Philip clenched his hands as he thought of the money he wanted so badly. A few more months of that wretched life could matter nothing to the old man, but the few more months meant everything to him: he was getting to the end of his endurance, and when he thought of going back to work in the morning he shuddered with horror. His heart beat quickly at the thought which obsessed him, and though he made an effort to put it out of his mind he could not. It would be so easy, so desperately easy. He had no feeling for the old man, he had never liked him; he had been selfish all his life, selfish to his wife who adored him, indifferent to the boy who had been put in his charge; he was not a cruel man, but a stupid, hard man, eaten up with a small sensuality. It would be easy, desperately easy. Philip did not dare. He was afraid of remorse; it would be no good having the money if he regretted all his life what he had done. Though he had told himself so often that regret was futile, there were certain things that came back to him occasionally and worried him. He wished they were not on his conscience.

His uncle opened his eyes; Philip was glad, for he looked a little more human then. He was frankly horrified at the idea that had come to him, it was murder that he was meditating; and he wondered if other people had such thoughts or whether he was abnormal and depraved. He supposed he could not have done it when it came to the point, but there the thought was, constantly recurring: if he held his hand it was from fear. His uncle spoke.

"You're not looking forward to my death, Philip?"

Philip felt his heart beat against his chest.

"Good heavens, no."

"That's a good boy. I shouldn't like you to do that. You'll get a little bit of money when I pass away, but you mustn't look forward to it. It wouldn't profit you if you did."

He spoke in a low voice, and there was a curious anxiety in his tone. It sent a pang in Philip's heart. He wondered what strange insight might have led the old man to surmise what strange desires were in Philip's mind.

"I hope you'll live for another twenty years," he said.

"Oh, well, I can't expect to do that, but if I take care of myself I don't see why I shouldn't last another three or four."

He was silent for a while, and Philip found nothing to say.

Then, as if he had been thinking it all over, the old man spoke again.

"Everyone has the right to live as long as he can."

Philip wanted to distract his mind.

"By the way, I suppose you never hear from Miss Wilkinson now?"

"Yes, I had a letter some time this year. She's married, you know."

"Really?"

"Yes, she married a widower. I believe they're quite comfortable."

CXI

Next day Philip began work again, but the end which he expected within a few weeks did not come. The weeks passed into months. The winter wore away, and in the parks the trees burst into bud and into leaf. A terrible lassitude settled upon Philip. Time was passing, though it went with such heavy feet, and he thought that his youth was going and soon he would have lost it and nothing would have been accomplished. His work seemed more aimless now that there was the certainty of his leaving it. He became skilful in the designing of costumes, and though he had no inventive faculty acquired quickness in the adaptation of French fashions to the English market. Sometimes he was not displeased with his drawings, but they always bungled them in the execution. He was amused to notice that he suffered from a lively irritation when his ideas were not adequately carried out. He had to walk warily. Whenever he suggested something original Mr. Sampson turned it down: their customers did not want anything *outré,* it was a very respectable class of business, and when you had a connection of that sort it wasn't worth while taking liberties with it. Once or twice he spoke sharply to Philip; he thought the young man was getting a bit above himself, because Philip's ideas did not always coincide with his own.

"You jolly well take care, my fine young fellow, or one of these days you'll find yourself in the street."

Philip longed to give him a punch on the nose, but he restrained himself. After all it could not possibly last much longer, and then he would be done with all these people for ever. Sometimes in comic desperation he cried out that his uncle must be made of iron. What a constitution! The ills he suffered from would have killed any decent person twelve months before. When at last the news came that the Vicar was dying Philip, who had been thinking of other things, was taken by surprise. It was in July, and in another fortnight he was to have gone for his holiday. He received a letter from Mrs. Foster to say the doctor did not give Mr. Carey many days to live, and if Philip wished to see him again he must come at once. Philip went to the buyer and told him he wanted to leave. Mr. Sampson was a decent fellow, and when he knew the circumstances made no difficulties. Philip said good-

bye to the people in his department; the reason of his leaving had spread among them in an exaggerated form, and they thought he had come into a fortune. Mrs. Hodges had tears in her eyes when she shook hands with him.

"I suppose we shan't often see you again," she said.

"I'm glad to get away from Lynn's," he answered.

It was strange, but he was actually sorry to leave these people whom he thought he had loathed, and when he drove away from the house in Harrington Street it was with no exultation. He had so anticipated the emotions he would experience on this occasion that now he felt nothing: he was as unconcerned as though he were going for a few days' holiday.

"I've got a rotten nature," he said to himself. "I look forward to things awfully, and then when they come I'm always disappointed."

He reached Blackstable early in the afternoon. Mrs. Foster met him at the door, and her face told him that his uncle was not yet dead.

"He's a little better today," she said. "He's got a wonderful constitution."

She led him into the bed-room where Mr. Carey lay on his back. He gave Philip a slight smile, in which was a trace of satisfied cunning at having circumvented his enemy once more.

"I thought it was all up with me yesterday," he said, in an exhausted voice. "They'd all given me up, hadn't you, Mrs. Foster?"

"You've got a wonderful constitution, there's no denying that."

"There's life in the old dog yet."

Mrs. Foster said that the Vicar must not talk, it would tire him; she treated him like a child, with kindly despotism; and there was something childish in the old man's satisfaction at having cheated all their expectations. It struck him at once that Philip had been sent for, and he was amused that he had been brought on a fool's errand. If he could only avoid another of his heart attacks he would get well enough in a week or two; and he had had the attacks several times before; he always felt as if he were going to die, but he never did. They all talked of his constitution, but they none of them knew how strong it was.

"Are you going to stay a day or two?" he asked Philip, pretending to believe he had come down for a holiday.

"I was thinking of it," Philip answered cheerfully.

"A breath of sea-air will do you good."

Presently Dr. Wigram came, and after he had seen the Vicar talked with Philip. He adopted an appropriate manner.

"I'm afraid it is the end this time, Philip," he said. "It'll be a great loss to all of us. I've known him for five-and-thirty years."

"He seems well enough now," said Philip.

"I'm keeping him alive on drugs, but it can't last. It was dreadful these last two days, I thought he was dead half a dozen times."

The doctor was silent for a minute or two, but at the gate he said suddenly to Philip:

"Has Mrs. Foster said anything to you?"

"What d'you mean?"

"They're very superstitious, these people: she's got hold of an idea that he's got something on his mind, and he can't die till he gets rid of it; and he can't bring himself to confess it."

Philip did not answer, and the doctor went on.

"Of course it's nonsense. He's led a very good life, he's done his duty, he's been a good parish priest, and I'm sure we shall all miss him; he can't have anything to reproach himself with. I very much doubt whether the next vicar will suit us half so well."

For several days Mr. Carey continued without change. His appetite which had been excellent left him, and he could eat little. Dr. Wigram did not hesitate now to still the pain of the neuritis which tormented him; and that, with the constant shaking of his palsied limbs, was gradually exhausting him. His mind remained clear. Philip and Mrs. Foster nursed him between them. She was so tired by the many months during which she had been attentive to all his wants that Philip insisted on sitting up with the patient so that she might have her night's rest. He passed the long hours in an arm-chair so that he should not sleep soundly, and read by the light of shaded candles *The Thousand and One Nights*. He had not read them since he was a little boy, and they brought back his childhood to him. Sometimes he sat and listened to the silence of the night. When the effects of the opiate wore off Mr. Carey grew restless and kept him constantly busy.

At last, early one morning, when the birds were chattering noisily in the trees, he heard his name called. He went up to the bed. Mr. Carey was lying on his back, with his eyes looking at the ceiling; he did not turn them on Philip. Philip saw that sweat was on his forehead, and he took a towel and wiped it.

"Is that you, Philip?" the old man asked.

Philip was startled because the voice was suddenly changed. It was hoarse and low. So would a man speak if he was cold with fear.

"Yes, d'you want anything?"

There was a pause, and still the unseeing eyes stared at the ceiling. Then a twitch passed over the face.

"I think I'm going to die," he said.

"Oh, what nonsense!" cried Philip. "You're not going to die for years."

Two tears were wrung from the old man's eyes. They moved Philip horribly. His uncle had never betrayed any particular emotion in the affairs of life; and it was dreadful to see them now, for they signified a terror that was unspeakable.

"Send for Mr. Simmonds," he said. "I want to take the Communion."

Mr. Simmonds was the curate.

"Now?" asked Philip.

"Soon, or else it'll be too late."

Philip went to awake Mrs. Foster, but it was later than he thought and she was up already. He told her to send the gardener with a message, and he went back to his uncle's room.

"Have you sent for Mr. Simmonds?"

"Yes."

There was a silence. Philip sat by the bed-side, and occasionally wiped the sweating forehead.

"Let me hold your hand, Philip," the old man said at last.

Philip gave him his hand and he clung to it as to life, for comfort in his extremity. Perhaps he had never really loved anyone in all his days, but now he turned instinctively to a human being. His hand was wet and cold. It grasped Philip's with feeble, despairing energy. The old man was fighting with the fear of death. And Philip thought that all must go through that. Oh, how monstrous it was, and they could believe in a God that allowed his creatures to suffer such a cruel torture! He had never cared for his uncle, and for two years he had longed every day for his death; but now he could not overcome the compassion that filled his heart. What a price it was to pay for being other than the beasts!

They remained in silence broken only once by a low inquiry from Mr. Carey.

"Hasn't he come yet?"

At last the housekeeper came in softly to say that Mr. Simmonds was there. He carried a bag in which were his surplice and his hood. Mrs. Foster brought the communion plate. Mr. Simmonds shook hands silently with Philip, and then with professional gravity went to the sick man's side. Philip and the maid went out of the room.

Philip walked round the garden all fresh and dewy in the morn-

ing. The birds were singing gaily. The sky was blue, but the air, salt-laden, was sweet and cool. The roses were in full bloom. The green of the trees, the green of the lawns, was eager and brilliant. Philip walked, and as he walked he thought of the mystery which was proceeding in that bed-room. It gave him a peculiar emotion. Presently Mrs. Foster came out to him and said that his uncle wished to see him. The curate was putting his things back into the black bag. The sick man turned his head a little and greeted him with a smile. Philip was astonished, for there was a change in him, an extraordinary change; his eyes had no longer the terror-stricken look, and the pinching of his face had gone: he looked happy and serene.

"I'm quite prepared now," he said, and his voice had a different tone in it. "When the Lord sees fit to call me I am ready to give my soul into his hands."

Philip did not speak. He could see that his uncle was sincere. It was almost a miracle. He had taken the body and blood of his Saviour, and they had given him strength so that he no longer feared the inevitable passage into the night. He knew he was going to die: he was resigned. He only said one thing more:

"I shall rejoin my dear wife."

It startled Philip. He remembered with what a callous selfishness his uncle had treated her, how obtuse he had been to her humble, devoted love. The curate, deeply moved, went away and Mrs. Foster, weeping, accompanied him to the door. Mr. Carey, exhausted by his effort, fell into a light doze, and Philip sat down by the bed and waited for the end. The morning wore on, and the old man's breathing grew stertorous. The doctor came and said he was dying. He was unconscious and he pecked feebly at the sheets; he was restless and he cried out. Dr. Wigram gave him a hypodermic injection.

"It can't do any good now, he may die at any moment."

The doctor looked at his watch and then at the patient. Philip saw that it was one o'clock. Dr. Wigram was thinking of his dinner.

"It's no use your waiting," he said.

"There's nothing I can do," said the doctor.

When he was gone Mrs. Foster asked Philip if he would go to the carpenter, who was also the undertaker, and tell him to send up a woman to lay out the body.

"You want a little fresh air," she said, "it'll do you good."

The undertaker lived half a mile away. When Philip gave him his message, he said:

"When did the poor old gentleman die?"

Philip hesitated. It occurred to him that it would seem brutal to fetch a woman to wash the body while his uncle still lived, and he wondered why Mrs. Foster had asked him to come. They would think he was in a great hurry to kill the old man off. He thought the undertaker looked at him oddly. He repeated the question. It irritated Philip. It was no business of his.

"When did the Vicar pass away?"

Philip's first impulse was to say that it had just happened, but then it would seem inexplicable if the sick man lingered for several hours. He reddened and answered awkwardly.

"Oh, he isn't exactly dead yet."

The undertaker looked at him in perplexity, and he hurried to explain.

"Mrs. Foster is all alone and she wants a woman there. You understand, don't you? He may be dead by now."

The undertaker nodded.

"Oh, yes, I see. I'll send someone up at once."

When Philip got back to the vicarage he went up to the bedroom. Mrs. Foster rose from her chair by the bed-side.

"He's just as he was when you left," she said.

She went down to get herself something to eat, and Philip watched curiously the process of death. There was nothing human now in the unconscious being that struggled feebly. Sometimes a muttered ejaculation issued from the loose mouth. The sun beat down hotly from a cloudless sky, but the trees in the garden were pleasant and cool. It was a lovely day. A bluebottle buzzed against the window-pane. Suddenly there was a loud rattle, it made Philip start, it was horribly frightening; a movement passed through the limbs and the old man was dead. The machine had run down. The bluebottle buzzed, buzzed noisily against the window-pane.

CXII

Josiah Graves in his masterful way made arrangements, becoming but economical, for the funeral; and when it was over came back to the vicarage with Philip. The will was in his charge, and with a due sense of the fitness of things he read it to Philip over an early cup of tea. It was written on half a sheet of paper and left everything Mr. Carey had to his nephew. There was the furniture, about eighty pounds at the bank, twenty shares in the A.B.C. company, a few in Allsop's brewery, some in the Oxford music-hall, and a few more in a London restaurant. They had been bought under Mr. Graves' direction, and he told Philip with satisfaction:

"You see, people must eat, they will drink, and they want amusement. You're always safe if you put your money in what the public thinks necessities."

His words showed a nice discrimination between the grossness of the vulgar, which he deplored but accepted, and the finer taste of the elect. Altogether in investments there was about five hundred pounds; and to that must be added the balance at the bank and what the furniture would fetch. It was riches to Philip. He was not happy but infinitely relieved.

Mr. Graves left him, after they had discussed the auction which must be held as soon as possible, and Philip sat himself down to go through the papers of the deceased. The Rev. William Carey had prided himself on never destroying anything, and there were piles of correspondence dating back for fifty years and bundle upon bundle of neatly docketed bills. He had kept not only letters addressed to him, but letters which himself had written. There was a yellow packet of letters which he had written to his father in the forties, when as an Oxford undergraduate he had gone to Germany for the long vacation. Philip read them idly. It was a different William Carey from the William Carey he had known, and yet there were traces in the boy which might to an acute observer have suggested the man. The letters were formal and a little stilted. He showed himself strenuous to see all that was noteworthy, and he described with a fine enthusiasm the castles of the Rhine. The falls of Schaffhausen made him 'offer reverent thanks to the all-powerful Creator of the universe, whose works were wondrous

and beautiful,' and he could not help thinking that they who lived in sight of 'this handiwork of their blessed Maker must be moved by the contemplation to lead pure and holy lives.' Among some bills Philip found a miniature which had been painted of William Carey soon after he was ordained. It represented a thin young curate, with long hair that fell over his head in natural curls, with dark eyes, large and dreamy, and a pale ascetic face. Philip remembered the chuckle with which his uncle used to tell of the dozens of slippers which were worked for him by adoring ladies.

The rest of the afternoon and all the evening Philip toiled through the innumerable correspondence. He glanced at the address and at the signature, then tore the letter in two and threw it into the washing-basket by his side. Suddenly he came upon one signed Helen. He did not know the writing. It was thin, angular, and old-fashioned. It began: my dear William, and ended: your affectionate sister. Then it struck him that it was from his own mother. He had never seen a letter of hers before, and her handwriting was strange to him. It was about himself.

My dear William,

Stephen wrote to you to thank you for your congratulations on the birth of our son and your kind wishes to myself. Thank God we are both well and I am deeply thankful for the great mercy which has been shown me. Now that I can hold a pen I want to tell you and dear Louisa myself how truly grateful I am to you both for all your kindness to me now and always since my marriage. I am going to ask you to do me a great favour. Both Stephen and I wish you to be the boy's godfather, and we hope that you will consent. I know I am not asking a small thing, for I am sure you will take the responsibilities of the position very seriously, but I am especially anxious that you should undertake this office because you are a clergyman as well as the boy's uncle. I am very anxious for the boy's welfare and I pray God night and day that he may grow into a good, honest, and Christian man. With you to guide him I hope that he will become a soldier in Christ's Faith and be all the days of his life God-fearing, humble, and pious.

Your affectionate sister,

Helen.

Philip pushed the letter away and, leaning forward, rested his face on his hands. It deeply touched and at the same time surprised him. He was astonished at its religious tone, which seemed to him neither mawkish nor sentimental. He knew nothing of his

mother, dead now for nearly twenty years, but that she was beautiful, and it was strange to learn that she was simple and pious. He had never thought of that side of her. He read again what she said about him, what she expected and thought about him; he had turned out very differently; he looked at himself for a moment; perhaps it was better that she was dead. Then a sudden impulse caused him to tear up the letter; its tenderness and simplicity made it seem peculiarly private; he had a queer feeling that there was something indecent in his reading what exposed his mother's gentle soul. He went on with the Vicar's dreary correspondence.

A few days later he went up to London, and for the first time for two years entered by day the hall of St. Luke's Hospital. He went to see the secretary of the Medical School; he was surprised to see him and asked Philip curiously what he had been doing. Philip's experiences had given him a certain confidence in himself and a different outlook upon many things: such a question would have embarrassed him before; but now he answered coolly, with a deliberate vagueness which prevented further inquiry, that private affairs had obliged him to make a break in the curriculum; he was now anxious to qualify as soon as possible. The first examination he could take was in Midwifery and the Diseases of Women, and he put his name down to be a clerk in the ward devoted to feminine ailments; since it was holiday time there happened to be no difficulty in getting a post as obstetric clerk; he arranged to undertake that duty during the last week of August and the first two of September. After this interview Philip walked through the Medical School, more or less deserted, for the examinations at the end of the summer session were all over; and he wandered along the terrace by the river-side. His heart was full. He thought that now he could begin a new life, and he would put behind him all the errors, follies, and miseries of the past. The flowing river suggested that everything passed, was passing always, and nothing mattered; the future was before him rich with possibilities.

He went back to Blackstable and busied himself with the settling up of his uncle's estate. The auction was fixed for the middle of August, when the presence of visitors for the summer holidays would make it possible to get better prices. Catalogues were made out and sent to the various dealers in second-hand books at Tercanbury, Maidstone, and Ashford.

One afternoon Philip took it into his head to go over to Tercanbury and see his old school. He had not been there since the day when, with relief in his heart, he had left it with the feeling that thenceforward he was his own master. It was strange to wander

through the narrow streets of Tercanbury which he had known so well for so many years. He looked at the old shops, still there, still selling the same things; the booksellers with school-books, pious works, and the latest novels in one window and photographs of the Cathedral and of the city in the other; the games shop, with its cricket bats, fishing tackle, tennis rackets, and footballs; the tailor from whom he had got clothes all through his boyhood; and the fishmonger where his uncle whenever he came to Tercanbury bought fish. He wandered along the sordid street in which, behind a high wall, lay the red brick house which was the preparatory school. Further on was the gateway that led into King's School, and he stood in the quadrangle round which were the various buildings. It was just four and the boys were hurrying out of school. He saw the masters in their gowns and mortar-boards, and they were strange to him. It was more than ten years since he had left and many changes had taken place. He saw the headmaster; he walked slowly down from the schoolhouse to his own, talking to a big boy who Philip supposed was in the sixth; he was little changed, tall, cadaverous, romantic as Philip remembered him, with the same wild eyes; but the black beard was streaked with gray now and the dark, sallow face was more deeply lined. Philip had an impulse to go up and speak to him, but he was afraid he would have forgotten him, and he hated the thought of explaining who he was.

Boys lingered talking to one another, and presently some who had hurried to change came out to play fives; others straggled out in twos and threes and went out of the gateway. Philip knew they were going up to the cricket ground; others again went into the precincts to bat at the nets. Philip stood among them a stranger, one or two gave him an indifferent glance; but visitors, attracted by the Norman staircase, were not rare and excited little attention. Philip looked at them curiously. He thought with melancholy of the distance that separated him from them, and he thought bitterly how much he had wanted to do and how little done. It seemed to him that all those years, vanished beyond recall, had been utterly wasted. The boys, fresh and buoyant, were doing the same things that he had done, it seemed that not a day had passed since he left the school, and yet in that place where at least by name he had known everybody now he knew not a soul. In a few years these too, others taking their place, would stand alien as he stood; but the reflection brought him no solace; it merely impressed upon him the futility of human existence. Each generation repeated the trivial round. He wondered what had become of the boys who

were his companions: they were nearly thirty now; some would be dead, but others were married and had children; they were soldiers and parsons, doctors, lawyers; they were staid men who were beginning to put youth behind them. Had any of them made such a hash of life as he? He thought of the boy he had been devoted to; it was funny, he could not recall his name; he remembered exactly what he looked like, he had been his greatest friend; but his name would not come back to him. He looked back with amusement on the jealous emotions he had suffered on his account. It was irritating not to recollect his name. He longed to be a boy again, like those he saw sauntering through the quadrangle, so that, avoiding his mistakes, he might start fresh and make something more out of life. He felt an intolerable loneliness. He almost regretted the penury which he had suffered during the last two years, since the desperate struggle merely to keep body and soul together had deadened the pain of living. *In the sweat of thy brow shalt thou earn thy daily bread:* it was not a curse upon mankind, but the balm which reconciled it to existence.

But Philip was impatient with himself; he called to mind his idea of the pattern of life: the unhappiness he had suffered was no more than part of a decoration which was elaborate and beautiful; he told himself strenuously that he must accept with gaiety everything, dreariness and excitement, pleasure and pain, because it added to the richness of the design. He sought for beauty consciously, and he remembered how even as a boy he had taken pleasure in the Gothic cathedral as one saw it from the precincts; he went there and looked at the massive pile, gray under the cloudy sky, with the central tower that rose like the praise of men to their God; but the boys were batting at the nets, and they were lissom and strong and active; he could not help hearing their shouts and laughter. The cry of youth was insistent, and he saw the beautiful thing before him only with his eyes.

CXIII

At the beginning of the last week in August Philip entered upon his duties in the 'district.' They were arduous, for he had to attend on an average three confinements a day. The patient had obtained a 'card' from the hospital some time before; and when her time came it was taken to the porter by a messenger, generally a little girl, who was then sent across the road to the house in which Philip lodged. At night the porter, who had a latch-key, himself came over and awoke Philip. It was mysterious then to get up in the darkness and walk through the deserted streets of the South Side. At those hours it was generally the husband who brought the card. If there had been a number of babies before he took it for the most part with surly indifference, but if newly married he was nervous and then sometimes strove to allay his anxiety by getting drunk. Often there was a mile or more to walk, during which Philip and the messenger discussed the conditions of labour and the cost of living; Philip learnt about the various trades which were practised on that side of the river. He inspired confidence in the people among whom he was thrown, and during the long hours that he waited in a stuffy room, the woman in labour lying on a large bed that took up half of it, her mother and the midwife talked to him as naturally as they talked to one another. The circumstances in which he had lived during the last two years had taught him several things about the life of the very poor, which it amused them to find he knew; and they were impressed because he was not deceived by their little subterfuges. He was kind, and he had gentle hands, and he did not lose his temper. They were pleased because he was not above drinking a cup of tea with them, and when the dawn came and they were still waiting they offered him a slice of bread and dripping; he was not squeamish and could eat most things now with a good appetite. Some of the houses he went to, in filthy courts off a dingy street, huddled against one another without light or air, were merely squalid; but others, unexpectedly, though dilapidated, with worm-eaten floors and leaking roofs, had the grand air: you found in them oak balusters exquisitely carved, and the walls had still their panelling. These were thickly inhabited. One family lived in each room, and in the daytime there was the incessant noise of children playing in the court. The old walls were

the breeding-place of vermin; the air was so foul that often, feeling sick, Philip had to light his pipe. The people who dwelt here lived from hand to mouth. Babies were unwelcome, the man received them with surly anger, the mother with despair; it was one more mouth to feed, and there was little enough wherewith to feed those already there. Philip often discerned the wish that the child might be born dead or might die quickly. He delivered one woman of twins (a source of humour to the facetious) and when she was told she burst into a long, shrill wail of misery. Her mother said outright:

"I don't know how they're going to feed 'em."

"Maybe the Lord'll see fit to take 'em to 'imself," said the midwife.

Philip caught sight of the husband's face as he looked at the tiny pair lying side by side, and there was a ferocious sullenness in it which startled him. He felt in the family assembled there a hideous resentment against those poor atoms who had come into the world unwished for; and he had a suspicion that if he did not speak firmly an 'accident' would occur. Accidents occurred often; mothers 'overlay' their babies, and perhaps errors of diet were not always the result of carelessness.

"I shall come every day," he said. "I warn you that if anything happens to them there'll have to be an inquest."

The father made no reply, but he gave Philip a scowl. There was murder in his soul.

"Bless their little 'earts," said the grandmother, "what should 'appen to them?"

The great difficulty was to keep the mothers in bed for ten days, which was the minimum upon which the hospital practice insisted. It was awkward to look after the family, no one would see to the children without payment, and the husband grumbled because his tea was not right when he came home tired from his work and hungry. Philip had heard that the poor helped one another, but woman after woman complained to him that she could not get anyone in to clean up and see to the children's dinner without paying for the service, and she could not afford to pay. By listening to the women as they talked and by chance remarks from which he could deduce much that was left unsaid, Philip learned how little there was in common between the poor and the classes above them. They did not envy their betters, for the life was too different, and they had an ideal of ease which made the existence of the middle-classes seem formal and stiff; moreover, they had a certain contempt for them because they were soft and did not

work with their hands. The proud merely wished to be left alone, but the majority looked upon the well-to-do as people to be exploited; they knew what to say in order to get such advantages as the charitable put at their disposal, and they accepted benefits as a right which came to them from the folly of their superiors and their own astuteness. They bore the curate with contemptuous indifference, but the district visitor excited their bitter hatred. She came in and opened your windows without so much as a by your leave or with your leave, 'and me with my bronchitis, enough to give me my death of cold;' she poked her nose into corners, and if she didn't say the place was dirty you saw what she thought right enough, 'an' it's all very well for them as 'as servants, but I'd like to see what she'd make of 'er room if she 'ad four children, and 'ad to do the cookin', and mend their clothes, and wash them.'

Philip discovered that the greatest tragedy of life to these people was not separation or death, that was natural and the grief of it could be assuaged with tears, but loss of work. He saw a man come home one afternoon, three days after his wife's confinement, and tell her he had been dismissed; he was a builder and at that time work was slack; he stated the fact, and sat down to his tea.

"Oh, Jim," she said.

The man ate stolidly some mess which had been stewing in a sauce-pan against his coming; he stared at his plate; his wife looked at him two or three times, with little startled glances, and then quite silently began to cry. The builder was an uncouth little fellow with a rough, weather-beaten face and a long white scar on his forehead; he had large, stubbly hands. Presently he pushed aside his plate as if he must give up the effort to force himself to eat, and turned a fixed gaze out of the window. The room was at the top of the house, at the back, and one saw nothing but sullen clouds. The silence seemed heavy with despair. Philip felt that there was nothing to be said, he could only go; and as he walked away, wearily, for he had been up most of the night, his heart was filled with rage against the cruelty of the world. He knew the hopelessness of the search for work and the desolation which is harder to bear than hunger. He was thankful not to have to believe in God, for then such a condition of things would be intolerable; one could reconcile oneself to existence only because it was meaningless.

It seemed to Philip that the people who spent their time in helping the poorer classes erred because they sought to remedy things

which would harass them if themselves had to endure them without thinking that they did not in the least disturb those who were used to them. The poor did not want large airy rooms; they suffered from cold, for their food was not nourishing and their circulation bad; space gave them a feeling of chilliness, and they wanted to burn as little coal as need be; there was no hardship for several to sleep in one room, they preferred it; they were never alone for a moment, from the time they were born to the time they died, and loneliness oppressed them; they enjoyed the promiscuity in which they dwelt, and the constant noise of their surroundings pressed upon their ears unnoticed. They did not feel the need of taking a bath constantly, and Philip often heard them speak with indignation of the necessity to do so with which they were faced on entering the hospital: it was both an affront and a discomfort. They wanted chiefly to be left alone; then if the man was in regular work life went easily and was not without its pleasures: there was plenty of time for gossip, after the day's work a glass of beer was very good to drink, the streets were a constant source of entertainment, if you wanted to read there was *Reynolds'* or *The News of the World;* 'but there, you couldn't make out 'ow the time did fly, the truth was and that's a fact, you was a rare one for reading when you was a girl, but what with one thing and another you didn't get no time now not even to read the paper.'

The usual practice was to pay three visits after a confinement, and one Sunday Philip went to see a patient at the dinner hour. She was up for the first time.

"I couldn't stay in bed no longer, I really couldn't. I'm not one for idling, and it gives me the fidgets to be there and do nothing all day long, so I said to 'Erb, I'm just going to get up and cook your dinner for you."

'Erb was sitting at table with his knife and fork already in his hands. He was a young man, with an open face and blue eyes. He was earning good money, and as things went the couple were in easy circumstances. They had only been married a few months, and were both delighted with the rosy boy who lay in the cradle at the foot of the bed. There was a savoury smell of beefsteak in the room and Philip's eyes turned to the range.

"I was just going to dish up this minute," said the woman.

"Fire away," said Philip. "I'll just have a look at the son and heir and then I'll take myself off."

Husband and wife laughed at Philip's expression, and 'Erb getting up went over with Philip to the cradle. He looked at his baby proudly.

"There doesn't seem much wrong with him, does there?" said Philip.

He took up his hat, and by this time 'Erb's wife had dished up the beefsteak and put on the table a plate of green peas.

"You're going to have a nice dinner," smiled Philip.

"He's only in of a Sunday and I like to 'ave something special for him, so as he shall miss his 'ome when he's out at work."

"I suppose you'd be above sittin' down and 'avin' a bit of dinner with us?" said 'Erb.

"Oh, 'Erb," said his wife, in a shocked tone.

"Not if you ask me," answered Philip, with his attractive smile.

"Well, that's what I call friendly, I knew 'e wouldn't take offence, Polly. Just get another plate, my girl."

Polly was flustered, and she thought 'Erb a regular caution, you never knew what ideas 'e'd get in 'is 'ead next; but she got a plate and wiped it quickly with her apron, then took a new knife and fork from the chest of drawers, where her best cutlery rested among her best clothes. There was a jug of stout on the table, and 'Erb poured Philip out a glass. He wanted to give him the lion's share of the beeksteak, but Philip insisted that they should share alike. It was a sunny room with two windows that reached to the floor; it had been the parlour of a house which at one time was if not fashionable at least respectable: it might have been inhabited fifty years before by a well-to-do tradesman or an officer on half pay. 'Erb had been a football player before he married, and there were photographs on the wall of various teams in self-conscious attitudes, with neatly plastered hair, the captain seated proudly in the middle holding a cup. There were other signs of prosperity: photographs of the relations of 'Erb and his wife in Sunday clothes; on the chimney-piece an elaborate arrangement of shells stuck on a miniature rock; and on each side mugs, 'A present from Southend' in Gothic letters, with pictures of a pier and a parade on them. 'Erb was something of a character; he was a non-union man and expressed himself with indignation at the efforts of the union to force him to join. The union wasn't no good to him, he never found no difficulty in getting work, and there was good wages for anyone as 'ad a head on his shoulders and wasn't above puttin' 'is 'and to anything as come 'is way. Polly was timorous. If she was 'im she'd join the union, the last time there was a strike she was expectin' 'im to be brought back in an ambulance every time he went out. She turned to Philip.

"He's that obstinate, there's no doing anything with 'im."

"Well, what I say is, it's a free country, and I won't be dictated to."

"It's no good saying it's a free country," said Polly, "that won't prevent 'em bashin' your 'ead in if they get the chanst."

When they had finished Philip passed his pouch over to 'Erb and they lit their pipes; then he got up, for a 'call' might be waiting for him at his rooms, and shook hands. He saw that it had given them pleasure that he shared their meal, and they saw that he had thoroughly enjoyed it.

"Well, good-bye, sir," said 'Erb, "and I 'ope we shall 'ave as nice a doctor next time the missus disgraces 'erself."

"Go on with you, 'Erb," she retorted. "'Ow d'you know there's going to be a next time?"

CXIV

THE three weeks which the appointment lasted drew to an end. Philip had attended sixty-two cases, and he was tired out. When he came home about ten o'clock on his last night he hoped with all his heart that he would not be called out again. He had not had a whole night's rest for ten days. The case which he had just come from was horrible. He had been fetched by a huge, burly man, the worse for liquor, and taken to a room in an evil-smelling court, which was filthier than any he had seen: it was a tiny attic; most of the space was taken up by a wooden bed, with a canopy of dirty red hangings, and the ceiling was so low that Philip could touch it with the tips of his fingers; with the solitary candle that afforded what light there was he went over it, frizzling up the bugs that crawled upon it. The woman was a blowsy creature of middle age, who had had a long succession of still-born children. It was a story that Philip was not unaccustomed to: the husband had been a soldier in India; the legislation forced upon that country by the prudery of the English public had given a free run to the most distressing of all diseases; the innocent suffered. Yawning, Philip undressed and took a bath, then shook his clothes over the water and watched the animals that fell out wriggling. He was just going to get into bed when there was a knock at the door, and the hospital porter brought him a card.

"Curse you," said Philip. "You're the last person I wanted to see tonight. Who's brought it?"

"I think it's the 'usband, sir. Shall I tell him to wait?"

Philip looked at the address, saw that the street was familiar to him, and told the porter that he would find his own way. He dressed himself and in five minutes, with his black bag in his hand, stepped into the street. A man, whom he could not see in the darkness, came up to him, and said he was the husband.

"I thought I'd better wait, sir," he said. "It's a pretty rough neighbour'ood, and them not knowing who you was."

Philip laughed.

"Bless your heart, they all know the doctor, I've been in some damned sight rougher places than Waver Street."

It was quite true. The black bag was a passport through wretched alleys and down foul-smelling courts into which a police-

man was not ready to venture by himself. Once or twice a little group of men had looked at Philip curiously as he passed; he heard a mutter of observations and then one say:

"It's the 'orspital doctor."

As he went by one or two of them said: "Good-night, sir."

"We shall 'ave to step out if you don't mind, sir," said the man who accompanied him now. "They told me there was no time to lose."

"Why did you leave it so late?" asked Philip, as he quickened his pace.

He glanced at the fellow as they passed a lamp-post.

"You look awfully young," he said.

"I'm turned eighteen, sir."

He was fair, and he had not a hair on his face, he looked no more than a boy; he was short, but thick set.

"You're young to be married," said Philip.

"We 'ad to."

"How much d'you earn?"

"Sixteen, sir."

Sixteen shillings a week was not much to keep a wife and child on. The room the couple lived in showed that their poverty was extreme. It was a fair size, but it looked quite large, since there was hardly any furniture in it; there was no carpet on the floor; there were no pictures on the walls; and most rooms had something, photographs or supplements in cheap frames from the Christmas numbers of the illustrated papers. The patient lay on a little iron bed of the cheapest sort. It startled Philip to see how young she was.

"By Jove, she can't be more than sixteen," he said to the woman who had come in to 'see her through.'

She had given her age as eighteen on the card, but when they were very young they often put on a year or two. Also she was pretty, which was rare in those classes in which the constitution has been undermined by bad food, bad air, and unhealthy occupations; she had delicate features and large blue eyes, and a mass of dark hair done in the elaborate fashion of the coster girl. She and her husband were very nervous.

"You'd better wait outside, so as to be at hand if I want you," Philip said to him.

Now that he saw him better Philip was surprised again at his boyish air: you felt that he should be larking in the street with the other lads instead of waiting anxiously for the birth of a child. The hours passed, and it was not till nearly two that the baby

was born. Everything seemed to be going satisfactorily; the husband was called in, and it touched Philip to see the awkward, shy way in which he kissed his wife; Philip packed up his things. Before going he felt once more his patient's pulse.

"Hulloa!" he said.

He looked at her quickly: something had happened. In cases of emergency the S.O.C.—senior obstetric clerk—had to be sent for; he was a qualified man, and the 'district' was in his charge. Philip scribbled a note, and giving it to the husband, told him to run with it to the hospital; he bade him hurry, for his wife was in a dangerous state. The man set off. Philip waited anxiously; he knew the woman was bleeding to death; he was afraid she would die before his chief arrived; he took what steps he could. He hoped fervently that the S.O.C. would not have been called elsewhere. The minutes were interminable. He came at last, and, while he examined the patient, in a low voice asked Philip questions. Philip saw by his face that he thought the case very grave. His name was Chandler. He was a tall man of few words, with a long nose and a thin face much lined for his age. He shook his head.

"It was hopeless from the beginning. Where's the husband?"

"I told him to wait on the stairs," said Philip.

"You'd better bring him in."

Philip opened the door and called him. He was sitting in the dark on the first step of the flight that led to the next floor. He came up to the bed.

"What's the matter?" he said.

"Why, there's internal bleeding. It's impossible to stop it." The S.O.C. hesitated a moment, and because it was a painful thing to say he forced his voice to become brusque. "She's dying."

The man did not say a word; he stopped quite still, looking at his wife, who lay, pale and unconscious, on the bed. It was the midwife who spoke.

"The gentlemen 'ave done all they could, 'Arry," she said. "I saw what was comin' from the first."

"Shut up," said Chandler.

There were no curtains on the windows, and gradually the night seemed to lighten; it was not yet the dawn, but the dawn was at hand. Chandler was keeping the woman alive by all the means in his power, but life was slipping away from her, and suddenly she died. The boy who was her husband stood at the end of the cheap iron bed with his hands resting on the rail; he did not speak; but he looked very pale and once or twice Chandler gave him an uneasy glance, thinking he was going to faint: his lips were gray. The

midwife sobbed noisily, but he took no notice of her. His eyes were fixed upon his wife, and in them was an utter bewilderment. He reminded you of a dog whipped for something he did not know was wrong. When Chandler and Philip had gathered together their things Chandler turned to the husband.

"You'd better lie down for a bit. I expect you're about done up."

"There nowhere for me to lie down, sir," he answered, and there was in his voice a humbleness which was very distressing.

"Don't you know anyone in the house who'll give you a shake-down?"

"No, sir."

"They only moved in last week," said the midwife. "They don't know nobody yet."

Chandler hesitated a moment awkwardly, then he went up to the man and said:

"I'm very sorry this has happened."

He held out his hand and the man, with an instinctive glance at his own to see if it was clean, shook it.

"Thank you, sir."

Philip shook hands with him too. Chandler told the midwife to come and fetch the certificate in the morning. They left the house and walked along together in silence.

"It upsets one a bit at first, doesn't it?" said Chandler at last.

"A bit," answered Philip.

"If you like I'll tell the porter not to bring you any more calls tonight."

"I'm off duty at eight in the morning in any case."

"How many cases have you had?"

"Sixty-three."

"Good. You'll get your certificate then."

They arrived at the hospital, and the S.O.C. went in to see if anyone wanted him. Philip walked on. It had been very hot all the day before, and even now in the early morning there was a balminess in the air. The street was very still. Philip did not feel inclined to go to bed. It was the end of his work and he need not hurry. He strolled along, glad of the fresh air and the silence; he thought that he would go on to the bridge and look at day break on the river. A policeman at the corner bade him good-morning. He knew who Philip was from his bag.

"Out late tonight, sir," he said.

Philip nodded and passed. He leaned against the parapet and looked towards the morning. At that hour the great city was like a city of the dead. The sky was cloudless, but the stars were dim

at the approach of day; there was a light mist on the river, and the great buildings on the north side were like palaces in an enchanted island. A group of barges were moored in midstream. It was all of an unearthly violet, troubling somehow and awe-inspiring; but quickly everything grew pale, and cold, and gray. Then the sun rose, a ray of yellow gold stole across the sky, and the sky was iridescent. Philip could not get out of his eyes the dead girl lying on the bed, wan and white, and the boy who stood at the end of it like a stricken beast. The bareness of the squalid room made the pain of it more poignant. It was cruel that a stupid chance should have cut off her life when she was just entering upon it; but in the very moment of saying this to himself, Philip thought of the life which had been in store for her, the bearing of children the dreary fight with poverty, the youth broken by toil and deprivation into a slatternly middle age—he saw the pretty face grow thin and white, the hair grow scanty, the pretty hands, worn down brutally by work, become like the claws of an old animal—then, when the man was past his prime, the difficulty of getting jobs, the small wages he had to take; and the inevitable, abject penury of the end: she might be energetic, thrifty, industrious, it would not have saved her; in the end was the workhouse or subsistence on the charity of her children. Who could pity her because she had died when life offered so little?

But pity was inane. Philip felt it was not that which these people needed. They did not pity themselves. They accepted their fate. It was the natural order of things. Otherwise, good heavens! otherwise they would swarm over the river in their multitude to the side where those great buildings were, secure and stately; and they would pillage, burn, and sack. But the day, tender and pale, had broken now, and the mist was tenuous; it bathed everything in a soft radiance; and the Thames was gray, rosy, and green; gray like mother-of-pearl and green like the heart of a yellow rose. The wharves and store-houses of the Surrey Side were massed in disorderly loveliness. The scene was so exquisite that Philip's heart beat passionately. He was overwhelmed by the beauty of the world. Beside that nothing seemed to matter.

CXV

Philip spent the few weeks that remained before the beginning of the winter session in the out-patients' department, and in October settled down to regular work. He had been away from the hospital for so long that he found himself very largely among new people; the men of different years had little to do with one another, and his contemporaries were now mostly qualified: some had left to take up assistantships or posts in country hospitals and infirmaries, and some held appointments at St. Luke's. The two years during which his mind had lain fallow had refreshed him, he fancied, and he was able now to work with energy.

The Athelnys were delighted with his change of fortune. He had kept aside a few things from the sale of his uncle's effects and gave them all presents. He gave Sally a gold chain that had belonged to his aunt. She was now grown up. She was apprenticed to a dressmaker and set out every morning at eight to work all day in a shop in Regent Street. Sally had frank blue eyes, a broad brow, and plentiful shining hair; she was buxom, with broad hips and full breasts; and her father, who was fond of discussing her appearance, warned her constantly that she must not grow fat. She attracted because she was healthy, animal, and feminine. She had many admirers, but they left her unmoved; she gave one the impression that she looked upon love-making as nonsense; and it was easy to imagine that young men found her unapproachable. Sally was old for her years: she had been used to help her mother in the household work and in the care of the children, so that she had acquired a managing air, which made her mother say that Sally was a bit too fond of having things her own way. She did not speak very much, but as she grew older she seemed to be acquiring a quiet sense of humour, and sometimes uttered a remark which suggested that beneath her impassive exterior she was quietly bubbling with amusement at her fellow-creatures. Philip found that with her he never got on the terms of affectionate intimacy upon which he was with the rest of Athelny's huge family. Now and then her indifference slightly irritated him. There was something enigmatic in her.

When Philip gave her the necklace Athelny in his boisterous way insisted that she must kiss him; but Sally reddened and drew back.

"No, I'm not going to," she said.

"Ungrateful hussy!" cried Athelny. "Why not?"

"I don't like being kissed by men," she said.

Philip saw her embarrassment, and, amused, turned Athelny's attention to something else. That was never a very difficult thing to do. But evidently her mother spoke of the matter later, for next time Philip came she took the opportunity when they were alone for a couple of minutes to refer to it.

"You didn't think it disagreeable of me last week when I wouldn't kiss you?"

"Not a bit," he laughed.

"It's not because I wasn't grateful." She blushed a little as she uttered the formal phrase which she had prepared. "I shall always value the necklace, and it was very kind of you to give it me."

Philip found it always a little difficult to talk to her. She did all that she had to do very competently, but seemed to feel no need of conversation; yet there was nothing unsociable in her. One Sunday afternoon when Athelny and his wife had gone out together, and Philip, treated as one of the family, sat reading in the parlour, Sally came in and sat by the window to sew. The girls' clothes were made at home and Sally could not afford to spend Sundays in idleness. Philip thought she wished to talk and put down his book.

"Go on reading," she said. "I only thought as you were alone I'd come and sit with you."

"You're the most silent person I've ever struck," said Philip.

"We don't want another one who's talkative in this house," she said.

There was no irony in her tone: she was merely stating a fact. But it suggested to Philip that she measured her father, alas, no longer the hero he was to her childhood, and in her mind joined together his entertaining conversation and the thriftlessness which often brought difficulties into their life; she compared his rhetoric with her mother's practical common sense; and though the liveliness of her father amused her she was perhaps sometimes a little impatient with it. Philip looked at her as she bent over her work; she was healthy, strong, and normal; it must be odd to see her among the other girls in the shop with their flat chests and anæmic faces. Mildred suffered from anæmia.

After a time it appeared that Sally had a suitor. She went out occasionally with friends she had made in the work-room, and had met a young man, an electrical engineer in a very good way of

business, who was a most eligible person. One day she told her mother that he had asked her to marry him.

"What did you say?" said her mother.

"Oh, I told him I wasn't over-anxious to marry anyone just yet awhile." She paused a little as was her habit between observations. "He took on so that I said he might come to tea on Sunday."

It was an occasion that thoroughly appealed to Athelny. He rehearsed all the afternoon how he should play the heavy father for the young man's edification till he reduced his children to helpless giggling. Just before he was due Athelny routed out an Egyptian tarboosh and insisted on putting it on.

"Go on with you, Athelny," said his wife, who was in her best, which was of black velvet, and, since she was growing stouter every year, very tight for her. "You'll spoil the girl's chances."

She tried to pull it off, but the little man skipped nimbly out of her way.

"Unhand me, woman. Nothing will induce me to take it off. This young man must be shown at once that it is no ordinary family he is preparing to enter."

"Let him keep it on, mother," said Sally, in her even, indifferent fashion. "If Mr. Donaldson doesn't take it the way it's meant he can take himself off, and good riddance."

Philip thought it was a severe ordeal that the young man was being exposed to, since Athelny, in his brown velvet jacket, flowing black tie, and red tarboosh, was a startling spectacle for an innocent electrical engineer. When he came he was greeted by his host with the proud courtesy of a Spanish grandee and by Mrs. Athelny in an altogether homely and natural fashion. They sat down at the old ironing-table in the high-backed monkish chairs, and Mrs. Athelny poured tea out of a lustre teapot which gave a note of England and the country-side to the festivity. She had made little cakes with her own hand, and on the table was home-made jam. It was a farm-house tea, and to Philip very quaint and charming in that Jacobean house. Athelny for some fantastic reason took it into his head to discourse upon Byzantine history; he had been reading the later volumes of the *Decline and Fall;* and, his forefinger dramatically extended, he poured into the astonished ears of the suitor scandalous stories about Theodora and Irene. He addressed himself directly to his guest with a torrent of rhodomontade; and the young man, reduced to helpless silence and shy, nodded his head at intervals to show that he took an intelligent interest. Mrs. Athelny paid no attention to Thorpe's conversation, but interrupted now and then to offer the young man more tea or

to press upon him cake and jam. Philip watched Sally; she sat with downcast eyes, calm, silent, and observant; and her long eyelashes cast a pretty shadow on her cheek. You could not tell whether she was amused at the scene or if she cared for the young man. She was inscrutable. But one thing was certain: the electrical engineer was good-looking, fair and clean-shaven, with pleasant, regular features, and an honest face; he was tall and well-made. Philip could not help thinking he would make an excellent mate for her, and he felt a pang of envy for the happiness which he fancied was in store for them.

Presently the suitor said he thought it was about time he was getting along. Sally rose to her feet without a word and accompanied him to the door. When she came back her father burst out:

"Well, Sally, we think your young man very nice. We are prepared to welcome him into our family. Let the banns be called and I will compose a nuptial song."

Sally set about clearing away the tea-things. She did not answer. Suddenly she shot a swift glance at Philip.

"What did you think of him, Mr. Philip?"

She had always refused to call him Uncle Phil as the other children did, and would not call him Philip.

"I think you'd make an awfully handsome pair."

She looked at him quickly once more, and then with a slight blush went on with her business.

"I thought him a very nice civil-spoken young fellow," said Mrs. Athelny, "and I think he's just the sort to make any girl happy."

Sally did not reply for a minute or two, and Philip looked at her curiously: it might be thought that she was meditating upon what her mother had said, and on the other hand she might be thinking of the man in the moon.

"Why don't you answer when you're spoken to, Sally?" remarked her mother, a little irritably.

"I thought he was a silly."

"Aren't you going to have him then?"

"No, I'm not."

"I don't know how much more you want," said Mrs. Athelny, and it was quite clear now that she was put out. "He's a very decent young fellow and he can afford to give you a thorough good home. We've got quite enough to feed here without you. If you get a chance like that it's wicked not to take it. And I daresay you'd be able to have a girl to do the rough work."

Philip had never before heard Mrs. Athelny refer so directly

to the difficulties of her life. He saw how important it was that each child should be provided for.

"It's no good your carrying on, mother," said Sally in her quiet way. "I'm not going to marry him."

"I think you're a very hard-hearted, cruel, selfish girl."

"If you want me to earn my own living, mother, I can always go into service."

"Don't be so silly, you know your father would never let you do that."

Philip caught Sally's eye, and he thought there was in it a glimmer of amusement. He wondered what there had been in the conversation to touch her sense of humour. She was an odd girl.

CXVI

During his last year at St. Luke's Philip had to work hard. He was contented with life. He found it very comfortable to be heart free and to have enough money for his needs. He had heard people speak contemptuously of money: he wondered if they had ever tried to do without it. He knew that the lack made a man petty, mean, grasping; it distorted his character and caused him to view the world from a vulgar angle; when you had to consider every penny, money became of grotesque importance: you needed a competency to rate it at its proper value. He lived a solitary life, seeing no one except the Athelnys, but he was not lonely; he busied himself with plans for the future, and sometimes he thought of the past. His recollection dwelt now and then on old friends, but he made no effort to see them. He would have liked to know what was become of Norah Nesbit; she was Norah something else now, but he could not remember the name of the man she was going to marry; he was glad to have known her: she was a good and a brave soul. One evening about half past eleven he saw Lawson, walking along Piccadilly; he was in evening clothes and might be supposed to be coming back from a theatre. Philip gave way to a sudden impulse and quickly turned down a side street. He had not seen him for two years and felt that he could not now take up again the interrupted friendship. He and Lawson had nothing more to say to one another. Philip was no longer interested in art; it seemed to him that he was able to enjoy beauty with greater force than when he was a boy; but art appeared to him unimportant. He was occupied with the forming of a pattern out of the manifold chaos of life, and the materials with which he worked seemed to make preoccupation with pigments and words very trivial. Lawson had served his turn. Philip's friendship with him had been a motive in the design he was elaborating: it was merely sentimental to ignore the fact that the painter was of no further interest to him.

Sometimes Philip thought of Mildred. He avoided deliberately the streets in which there was a chance of seeing her; but occasionally some feeling, perhaps curiosity, perhaps something deeper which he would not acknowledge, made him wander about Piccadilly and Regent Street during the hours when she might be expected to be there. He did not know then whether he wished to see

her or dreaded it. Once he saw a back which reminded him of hers, and for a moment he thought it was she; it gave him a curious sensation: it was a strange sharp pain in his heart, there was fear in it and a sickening dismay; and when he hurried on and found that he was mistaken he did not know whether it was relief that he experienced or disappointment.

At the beginning of August Philip passed his Surgery, his last examination, and received his diploma. It was seven years since he had entered St. Luke's Hospital. He was nearly thirty. He walked down the stairs of the Royal College of Surgeons with the roll in his hand which qualified him to practice, and his heart beat with satisfaction.

"Now I'm really going to begin life," he thought.

Next day he went to the secretary's office to put his name down for one of the hospital appointments. The secretary was a pleasant little man with a black beard, whom Philip had always found very affable. He congratulated him on his success, and then said:

"I suppose you wouldn't like to do a locum for a month on the South coast? Three guineas a week with board and lodging."

"I wouldn't mind," said Philip.

"It's at Farnley, in Dorsetshire. Doctor South. You'd have to go down at once; his assistant has developed mumps. I believe it's a very pleasant place."

There was something in the secretary's manner that puzzled Philip. It was a little doubtful.

"What's the crab in it?" he asked.

The secretary hesitated a moment and laughed in a conciliating fashion.

"Well, the fact is, I understand he's rather a crusty, funny old fellow. The agencies won't send him anyone any more. He speaks his mind very openly, and men don't like it."

"But d'you think he'll be satisfied with a man who's only just qualified? After all I have no experience."

"He ought to be glad to get you," said the secretary diplomatically.

Philip thought for a moment. He had nothing to do for the next few weeks, and he was glad of the chance to earn a bit of money. He could put it aside for the holiday in Spain which he had promised himself when he had finished his appointment at St. Luke's or, if they would not give him anything there, at some other hospital.

"All right. I'll go."

"The only thing is, you must go this afternoon. Will that suit you? If so, I'll send a wire at once."

Philip would have liked a few days to himself; but he had seen the Athelnys the night before (he had gone at once to take them his good news) and there was really no reason why he should not start immediately. He had little luggage to pack. Soon after seven that evening he got out of the station at Farnley and took a cab to Doctor South's. It was a broad low stucco house, with a Virginia creeper growing over it. He was shown into the consulting-room. An old man was writing at a desk. He looked up as the maid ushered Philip in. He did not get up, and he did not speak; he merely stared at Philip. Philip was taken aback.

"I think you're expecting me," he said. "The secretary of St. Luke's wired to you this morning."

"I kept dinner back for half an hour. D'you want to wash?"

"I do," said Philip.

Doctor South amused him by his odd manner. He got up now, and Philip saw that he was a man of middle height, thin, with white hair cut very short and a long mouth closed so tightly that he seemed to have no lips at all; he was clean-shaven but for small white whiskers, and they increased the squareness of face which his firm jaw gave him. He wore a brown tweed suit and a white stock. His clothes hung loosely about him as though they had been made for a much larger man. He looked like a respectable farmer of the middle of the nineteenth century. He opened the door.

"There is the dining-room," he said, pointing to the door opposite. "Your bed-room is the first door you come to when you get on the landing. Come downstairs when you're ready."

During dinner Philip knew that Doctor South was examining him, but he spoke little, and Philip felt that he did not want to hear his assistant talk.

"When were you qualified?" he asked suddenly.

"Yesterday."

"Were you at a university?"

"No."

"Last year when my assistant took a holiday they sent me a 'Varsity man. I told 'em not to do it again. Too damned gentlemanly for me."

There was another pause. The dinner was very simple and very good. Philip preserved a sedate exterior, but in his heart he was bubbling over with excitement. He was immensely elated at being engaged as a locum; it made him feel extremely grown up; he had an insane desire to laugh at nothing in particular; and the

more he thought of his professional dignity the more he was inclined to chuckle.

But Doctor South broke suddenly into his thoughts.

"How old are you?"

"Getting on for thirty."

"How is it you're only just qualified?"

"I didn't go in for the medical till I was nearly twenty-three, and I had to give it up for two years in the middle."

"Why?"

"Poverty."

Doctor South gave him an odd look and relapsed into silence. At the end of dinner he got up from the table.

"D'you know what sort of a practice this is?"

"No," answered Philip.

"Mostly fishermen and their families. I have the Union and the Seamen's Hospital. I used to be alone here, but since they tried to make this into a fashionable sea-side resort a man has set up on the cliff, and the well-to-do people go to him. I only have those who can't afford to pay for a doctor at all."

Philip saw that the rivalry was a sore point with the old man.

"You know that I have no experience," said Philip.

"You none of you know anything."

He walked out of the room without another word and left Philip by himself. When the maid came in to clear away she told Philip that Doctor South saw patients from six till seven. Work for that night was over. Philip fetched a book from his room, lit his pipe, and settled himself down to read. It was a great comfort, since he had read nothing but medical books for the last few months. At ten o'clock Doctor South came in and looked at him. Philip hated not to have his feet up, and he had dragged up a chair for them.

"You seem able to make yourself pretty comfortable," said Doctor South, with a grimness which would have disturbed Philip if he had not been in such high spirits.

Philip's eyes twinkled as he answered.

"Have you any objection?"

Doctor South gave him a look, but did not reply directly.

"What's that you're reading?"

"*Peregrine Pickle.* Smollett."

"I happen to know that Smollett wrote *Peregrine Pickle.*"

"I beg your pardon. Medical men aren't much interested in literature, are they?"

Philip had put the book down on the table, and Doctor South took it up. It was a volume of an edition which had belonged to

the Vicar of Blackstable. It was a thin book bound in faded morocco, with a copper-plate engraving as a frontispiece; the pages were musty with age and stained with mould. Philip, without meaning to, started forward a little as Doctor South took the volume in his hands, and a slight smile came into his eyes. Very little escaped the old doctor.

"Do I amuse you?" he asked icily.

"I see you're fond of books. You can always tell by the way people handle them."

Doctor South put down the novel immediately.

"Breakfast at eight-thirty," he said, and left the room.

"What a funny old fellow!" thought Philip.

He soon discovered why Doctor South's assistants found it difficult to get on with him. In the first place, he set his face firmly against all the discoveries of the last thirty years: he had no patience with the drugs which became modish, were thought to work marvellous cures, and in a few years were discarded; he had stock mixtures which he had brought from St. Luke's, where he had been a student, and had used all his life; he found them just as efficacious as anything that had come into fashion since. Philip was startled at Dr. South's suspicion of asepsis; he had accepted it in deference to universal opinion; but he used the precautions which Philip had known insisted upon so scrupulously at the hospital with the disdainful tolerance of a man playing at soldiers with children.

"I've seen antiseptics come along and sweep everything before them, and then I've seen asepsis take their place. Bunkum!"

The young men who were sent down to him knew only hospital practice; and they came with the unconcealed scorn for the General Practitioner which they had absorbed in the air at the hospital, but they had seen only the complicated cases which appeared in the wards; they knew how to treat an obscure disease of the suprarenal bodies, but were helpless when consulted for a cold in the head. Their knowledge was theoretical and their self-assurance unbounded. Doctor South watched them with tightened lips; he took a savage pleasure in showing them how great was their ignorance and how unjustified their conceit. It was a poor practice, of fishing folk, and the doctor made up his own prescriptions. Doctor South asked his assistant how he expected to make both ends meet if he gave a fisherman with a stomach-ache a mixture consisting of half a dozen expensive drugs. He complained too that the young medical men were uneducated: their reading consisted of *The Sporting Times* and *The British Medical Journal;* they could neither write a legible hand nor spell correctly. For two or three

days Doctor South watched Philip closely, ready to fall on him with acid sarcasm if he gave him the opportunity; and Philip, aware of this, went about his work with a quiet sense of amusement. He was pleased with the change of occupation. He liked the feeling of independence and of responsibility. All sorts of people came to the consulting-room. He was gratified because he seemed able to inspire his patients with confidence; and it was entertaining to watch the process of cure which at a hospital necessarily could be watched only at distant intervals. His rounds took him into low-roofed cottages in which were fishing tackle and sails and here and there mementoes of deep-sea travelling, a lacquer box from Japan, spears and oars from Melanesia, or daggers from the bazaars of Stamboul; there was an air of romance in the stuffy little rooms, and the salt of the sea gave them a bitter freshness. Philip liked to talk to the sailor-men, and when they found that he was not supercilious they told him long yarns of the distant journeys of their youth.

Once or twice he made a mistake in diagnosis; (he had never seen a case of measles before, and when he was confronted with the rash took it for an obscure disease of the skin;) and once or twice his ideas of treatment differed from Doctor South's. The first time this happened Doctor South attacked him with savage irony; but Philip took it with good humour; he had some gift for repartee, and he made one or two answers which caused Doctor South to stop and look at him curiously. Philip's face was grave, but his eyes were twinkling. The old gentleman could not avoid the impression that Philip was chaffing him. He was used to being disliked and feared by his assistants, and this was a new experience. He had half a mind to fly into a passion and pack Philip off by the next train, he had done that before with his assistants; but he had an uneasy feeling that Philip then would simply laugh at him outright; and suddenly he felt amused. His mouth formed itself into a smile against his will, and he turned away. In a little while he grew conscious that Philip was amusing himself systematically at his expense. He was taken aback at first and then diverted.

"Damn his impudence," he chuckled to himself. "Damn his impudence."

CXVII

Philip had written to Athelny to tell him that he was doing a locum in Dorsetshire and in due course received an answer from him. It was written in the formal manner he affected, studded with pompous epithets as a Persian diadem was studded with precious stones; and in the beautiful hand, like black letter and as difficult to read, upon which he prided himself. He suggested that Philip should join him and his family in the Kentish hop-field to which he went every year; and to persuade him said various beautiful and complicated things about Philip's soul and the winding tendrils of the hops. Philip replied at once that he would come on the first day he was free. Though not born there, he had a peculiar affection for the Isle of Thanet, and he was fired with enthusiasm at the thought of spending a fortnight so close to the earth and amid conditions which needed only a blue sky to be as idyllic as the olive groves of Arcady.

The four weeks of his engagement at Farnley passed quickly. On the cliff a new town was springing up, with red brick villas round golf links, and a large hotel had recently been opened to cater for the summer visitors; but Philip went there seldom. Down below, by the harbour, the little stone houses of a past century were clustered in a delightful confusion, and the narrow streets, climbing down steeply, had an air of antiquity which appealed to the imagination. By the water's edge were neat cottages with trim, tiny gardens in front of them; they were inhabited by retired captains in the merchant service, and by mothers or widows of men who had gained their living by the sea; and they had an appearance which was quaint and peaceful. In the little harbour came tramps from Spain and the Levant, ships of small tonnage; and now and then a windjammer was borne in by the winds of romance. It reminded Philip of the dirty little harbour with its colliers at Blackstable, and he thought that there he had first acquired the desire, which was now an obsession, for Eastern lands and sunlit islands in a tropic sea. But here you felt yourself closer to the wide, deep ocean than on the shore of that North Sea which seemed always circumscribed; here you could draw a long breath as you looked out upon the even vastness; and the west wind, the dear soft salt wind of England, uplifted the heart and at the same time melted it to tenderness.

One evening, when Philip had reached his last week with Doctor South, a child came to the surgery door while the old doctor and Philip were making up prescriptions. It was a little ragged girl with a dirty face and bare feet. Philip opened the door.

"Please, sir, will you come to Mrs. Fletcher's in Ivy Lane at once?"

"What's the matter with Mrs. Fletcher?" called out Doctor South in his rasping voice.

The child took no notice of him, but addressed herself again to Philip.

"Please, sir, her little boy's had an accident and will you come at once?"

"Tell Mrs. Fletcher I'm coming," called out Doctor South.

The little girl hesitated for a moment, and putting a dirty finger in a dirty mouth stood still and looked at Philip.

"What's the matter, Kid?" said Philip, smiling.

"Please, sir, Mrs. Fletcher says, will the new doctor come?"

There was a sound in the dispensary and Doctor South came out into the passage.

"Isn't Mrs. Fletcher satisfied with me?" he barked. "I've attended Mrs. Fletcher since she was born. Why aren't I good enough to attend her filthy brat?"

The little girl looked for a moment as though she were going to cry, then she thought better of it; she put out her tongue deliberately at Doctor South, and, before he could recover from his astonishment, bolted off as fast as she could run. Philip saw that the old gentleman was annoyed.

"You look rather fagged, and it's a goodish way to Ivy Lane," he said, by way of giving him an excuse not to go himself.

Doctor South gave a low snarl.

"It's a damned sight nearer for a man who's got the use of both legs than for a man who's only got one and a half."

Philip reddened and stood silent for a while.

"Do you wish me to go or will you go yourself?" he said at last frigidly.

"What's the good of my going? They want you."

Philip took up his hat and went to see the patient. It was hard upon eight o'clock when he came back. Doctor South was standing in the dining-room with his back to the fireplace.

"You've been a long time," he said.

"I'm sorry. Why didn't you start dinner?"

"Because I chose to wait. Have you been all this while at Mrs. Fletcher's?"

"No, I'm afraid I haven't. I stopped to look at the sunset on my way back, and I didn't think of the time."

Doctor South did not reply, and the servant brought in some grilled sprats. Philip ate them with an excellent appetite. Suddenly Doctor South shot a question at him.

"Why did you look at the sunset?"

Philip answered with his mouth full.

"Because I was happy."

Doctor South gave him an odd look, and the shadow of a smile flickered across his old, tired face. They ate the rest of the dinner in silence; but when the maid had given them the port and left the room, the old man leaned back and fixed his sharp eyes on Philip.

"It stung you up a bit when I spoke of your game leg, young fellow?" he said.

"People always do, directly or indirectly, when they get angry with me."

"I suppose they know it's your weak point."

Philip faced him and looked at him steadily.

"Are you very glad to have discovered it?"

The doctor did not answer, but he gave a chuckle of bitter mirth. They sat for a while staring at one another. Then Doctor South surprised Philip extremely.

"Why don't you stay here and I'll get rid of that damned fool with his mumps?"

"It's very kind of you, but I hope to get an appointment at the hospital in the autumn. It'll help me so much in getting other work later."

"I'm offering you a partnership," said Doctor South grumpily.

"Why?" asked Philip, with surprise.

"They seem to like you down here."

"I didn't think that was a fact which altogether met with your approval," Philip said drily.

"D'you suppose that after forty years' practice I care a twopenny damn whether people prefer my assistant to me? No, my friend. There's no sentiment between my patients and me. I don't expect gratitude from them, I expect them to pay my fees. Well, what d'you say to it?"

Philip made no reply, not because he was thinking over the proposal, but because he was astonished. It was evidently very unusual for someone to offer a partnership to a newly qualified man; and he realised with wonder that, although nothing would induce him to say so, Doctor South had taken a fancy to him. He thought how amused the secretary at St. Luke's would be when he told him.

"The practice brings in about seven hundred a year. We can reckon out how much your share would be worth, and you can pay me off by degrees. And when I die you can succeed me. I think that's better than knocking about hospitals for two or three years, and then taking assistantships until you can afford to set up for yourself."

Philip knew it was a chance that most people in his profession would jump at; the profession was overcrowded, and half the men he knew would be thankful to accept the certainty of even so modest a competence as that.

"I'm awfully sorry, but I can't," he said. "It means giving up everything I've aimed at for years. In one way and another I've had a roughish time, but I always had that one hope before me, to get qualified so that I might travel; and now, when I wake in the morning, my bones simply ache to get off, I don't mind where particularly, but just away, to places I've never been to."

Now the goal seemed very near. He would have finished his appointment at St. Luke's by the middle of the following year, and then he would go to Spain; he could afford to spend several months there, rambling up and down the land which stood to him for romance; after that he would get a ship and go to the East. Life was before him and time of no account. He could wander, for years if he chose, in unfrequented places, amid strange peoples, where life was led in strange ways. He did not know what he sought or what his journeys would bring him; but he had a feeling that he would learn something new about life and gain some clue to the mystery that he had solved only to find more mysterious. And even if he found nothing he would allay the unrest which gnawed at his heart. But Doctor South was showing him a great kindness, and it seemed ungrateful to refuse his offer for no adequate reason; so in his shy way, trying to appear as matter of fact as possible, he made some attempt to explain why it was so important to him to carry out the plans he had cherished so passionately.

Doctor South listened quietly, and a gentle look came into his shrewd old eyes. It seemed to Philip an added kindness that he did not press him to accept his offer. Benevolence is often very peremptory. He appeared to look upon Philip's reasons as sound. Dropping the subject, he began to talk of his own youth; he had been in the Royal Navy, and it was his long connection with the sea that, when he retired, had made him settle at Farnley. He told Philip of old days in the Pacific and of wild adventures in China. He had taken part in an expedition against the head-

hunters of Borneo and had known Samoa when it was still an independent state. He had touched at coral islands. Philip listened to him entranced. Little by little he told Philip about himself. Doctor South was a widower, his wife had died thirty years before, and his daughter had married a farmer in Rhodesia; he had quarrelled with him, and she had not come to England for ten years. It was just as if he had never had wife or child. He was very lonely. His gruffness was little more than a protection which he wore to hide a complete disillusionment; and to Philip it seemed tragic to see him just waiting for death, not impatiently, but rather with loathing for it, hating old age and unable to resign himself to its limitations, and yet with the feeling that death was the only solution of the bitterness of his life. Philip crossed his path, and the natural affection which long separation from his daughter had killed—she had taken her husband's part in the quarrel and her children he had never seen—settled itself upon Philip. At first it made him angry, he told himself it was a sign of dotage; but there was something in Philip that attracted him, and he found himself smiling at him he knew not why. Philip did not bore him. Once or twice he put his hand on his shoulder: it was as near a caress as he had got since his daughter left England so many years before. When the time came for Philip to go Doctor South accompanied him to the station: he found himself unaccountably depressed.

"I've had a ripping time here," said Philip. "You've been awfully kind to me."

"I suppose you're very glad to go?"

"I've enjoyed myself here."

"But you want to get out into the world? Ah, you have youth." He hesitated a moment. "I want you to remember that if you change your mind my offer still stands."

"That's awfully kind of you."

Philip shook hands with him out of the carriage window, and the train steamed out of the station. Philip thought of the fortnight he was going to spend in the hop-field: he was happy at the idea of seeing his friends again, and he rejoiced because the day was fine. But Doctor South walked slowly back to his empty house. He felt very old and very lonely.

CXVIII

It was late in the evening when Philip arrived at Ferne. It was Mrs. Athelny's native village, and she had been accustomed from her childhood to pick in the hop-field to which with her husband and her children she still went every year. Like many Kentish folk her family had gone out regularly, glad to earn a little money, but especially regarding the annual outing, looked forward to for months, as the best of holidays. The work was not hard, it was done in common, in the open air, and for the children it was a long, delightful picnic; here the young men met the maidens; in the long evenings when work was over they wandered about the lanes, making love; and the hopping season was generally followed by weddings. They went out in carts with bedding, pots and pans, chairs and tables; and Ferne while the hopping lasted was deserted. They were very exclusive and would have resented the intrusion of foreigners, as they called the people who came from London; they looked down upon them and feared them too; they were a rough lot, and the respectable country folk did not want to mix with them. In the old days the hoppers slept in barns, but ten years ago a row of huts had been erected at the side of a meadow; and the Athelnys, like many others, had the same hut every year.

Athelny met Philip at the station in a cart he had borrowed from the public-house at which he had got a room for Philip. It was a quarter of a mile from the hop-field. They left his bag there and walked over to the meadow in which were the huts. They were nothing more than a long, low shed, divided into little rooms about twelve feet square. In front of each was a fire of sticks, round which a family was grouped, eagerly watching the cooking of supper. The sea-air and the sun had browned already the faces of Athelny's children. Mrs. Athelny seemed a different woman in her sun-bonnet: you felt that the long years in the city had made no real difference to her; she was the country woman born and bred, and you could see how much at home she found herself in the country. She was frying bacon and at the same time keeping an eye on the younger children, but she had a hearty handshake and a jolly smile for Philip. Athelny was enthusiastic over the delights of a rural existence.

"We're starved for sun and light in the cities we live in. It

isn't life, it's a long imprisonment. Let us sell all we have, Betty, and take a farm in the country."

"I can see you in the country," she answered with good-humoured scorn. "Why, the first rainy day we had in the winter you'd be crying for London." She turned to Philip. "Athelny's always like this when we come down here. Country, I like that! Why, he don't know a swede from a mangel wurzel."

"Daddy was lazy today," remarked Jane, with the frankness which characterized her, "he didn't fill one bin."

"I'm getting into practice, child, and tomorrow I shall fill more bins than all of you put together."

"Come and eat your supper, children," said Mrs. Athelny. "Where's Sally?"

"Here I am, mother."

She stepped out of their little hut, and the flames of the wood fire leaped up and cast sharp colour upon her face. Of late Philip had only seen her in the trim frocks she had taken to since she was at the dressmaker's, and there was something very charming in the print dress she wore now, loose and easy to work in; the sleeves were tucked up and showed her strong, round arms. She too had a sun-bonnet.

"You look like a milkmaid in a fairy story," said Philip, as he shook hands with her.

"She's the belle of the hop-fields," said Athelny. "My word, if the Squire's son sees you he'll make you an offer of marriage before you can say Jack Robinson."

"The Squire hasn't got a son, father," said Sally.

She looked about for a place to sit down in, and Philip made room for her beside him. She looked wonderful in the night lit by wood fires. She was like some rural goddess, and you thought of those fresh, strong girls whom old Herrick had praised in exquisite numbers. The supper was simple, bread and butter, crisp bacon, tea for the children, and beer for Mr. and Mrs. Athelny and Philip. Athelny, eating hungrily, praised loudly all he ate. He flung words of scorn at Lucullus and piled invectives upon Brillat-Savarin.

"There's one thing one can say for you, Athelny," said his wife, "you do enjoy your food and no mistake!"

"Cooked by your hand, my Betty," he said, stretching out an eloquent forefinger.

Philip felt himself very comfortable. He looked happily at the line of fires, with people grouped about them, and the colour of the flames against the night; at the end of the meadow was a line of great elms, and above the starry sky. The children talked and

laughed, and Athelny, a child among them, made them roar by his tricks and fancies.

"They think a rare lot of Athelny down here," said his wife. "Why, Mrs. Bridges said to me, I don't know what we should do without Mr. Athelny now, she said. He's always up to something, he's more like a schoolboy than the father of a family."

Sally sat in silence, but she attended to Philip's wants in a thoughtful fashion that charmed him. It was pleasant to have her beside him, and now and then he glanced at her sunburned, healthy face. Once he caught her eyes, and she smiled quietly. When supper was over Jane and a small brother were sent down to a brook that ran at the bottom of the meadow to fetch a pail of water for washing up.

"You children, show your Uncle Philip where we sleep, and then you must be thinking of going to bed."

Small hands seized Philip, and he was dragged towards the hut. He went in and struck a match. There was no furniture in it; and beside a tin box, in which clothes were kept, there was nothing but the beds; there were three of them, one against each wall. Athelny followed Philip in and showed them proudly.

"That's the stuff to sleep on," he cried. "None of your spring-mattresses and swansdown. I never sleep so soundly anywhere as here. *You* will sleep between sheets. My dear fellow, I pity you from the bottom of my soul."

The beds consisted of a thick layer of hopbine, on the top of which was a coating of straw, and this was covered with a blanket. After a day in the open air, with the aromatic scent of the hops all round them, the happy pickers slept like tops. By nine o'clock all was quiet in the meadow and everyone in bed but one or two men who still lingered in the public-house and would not come back till it was closed at ten. Athelny walked there with Philip. But before he went Mrs. Athelny said to him:

"We breakfast about a quarter to six, but I daresay you won't want to get up as early as that. You see, we have to set to work at six."

"Of course he must get up early," cried Athelny, "and he must work like the rest of us. He's got to earn his board. No work, no dinner, my lad."

"The children go down to bathe before breakfast, and they can give you a call on their way back. They pass The Jolly Sailor."

"If they'll wake me I'll come and bathe with them," said Philip.

Jane and Harold and Edward shouted with delight at the prospect, and next morning Philip was awakened out of a sound

sleep by their bursting into his room. The boys jumped on his bed, and he had to chase them out with his slippers. He put on a coat and a pair of trousers and went down. The day had only just broken, and there was a nip in the air; but the sky was cloudless, and the sun was shining yellow. Sally, holding Connie's hand, was standing in the middle of the road, with a towel and a bathing-dress over her arm. He saw now that her sun-bonnet was of the colour of lavender, and against it her face, red and brown, was like an apple. She greeted him with her slow, sweet smile, and he noticed suddenly that her teeth were small and regular and very white. He wondered why they had never caught his attention before.

"I was for letting you sleep on," she said, "but they would go up and wake you. I said you didn't really want to come."

"Oh, yes, I did."

They walked down the road and then cut across the marshes. That way it was under a mile to the sea. The water looked cold and gray, and Philip shivered at the sight of it; but the others tore off their clothes and ran in shouting. Sally did everything a little slowly, and she did not come into the water till all the rest were splashing round Philip. Swimming was his only accomplishment; he felt at home in the water; and soon he had them all imitating him as he played at being a porpoise, and a drowning man, and a fat lady afraid of wetting her hair. The bathe was uproarious, and it was necessary for Sally to be very severe to induce them all to come out.

"You're as bad as any of them," she said to Philip, in her grave, maternal way, which was at once comic and touching. "They're not anything like so naughty when you're not here."

They walked back, Sally with her bright hair streaming over one shoulder and her sun-bonnet in her hand, but when they got to the huts Mrs. Athelny had already started for the hop-garden. Athelny, in a pair of the oldest trousers anyone had ever worn, his jacket buttoned up to show he had no shirt on, and in a wide-brimmed soft hat, was frying kippers over a fire of sticks. He was delighted with himself: he loooked every inch a brigand. As soon as he saw the party he began to shout the witches' chorus from *Macbeth* over the odorous kippers.

"You mustn't dawdle over your breakfast or mother will be angry," he said, when they came up.

And in a few minutes, Harold and Jane with pieces of bread and butter in their hands, they sauntered through the meadow into the hop-field. They were the last to leave. A hop-garden was one of

the sights connected with Philip's boyhood and the oast-houses to him the most typical feature of the Kentish scene. It was with no sense of strangeness, but as though he were at home, that Philip followed Sally through the long lines of the hops. The sun was bright now and cast a sharp shadow. Philip feasted his eyes on the richness of the green leaves. The hops were yellowing, and to him they had the beauty and the passion which poets in Sicily have found in the purple grape. As they walked along Philip felt himself overwhelmed by the rich luxuriance. A sweet scent arose from the fat Kentish soil, and the fitful September breeze was heavy with the goodly perfume of the hops. Athelstan felt the exhilaration instinctively, for he lifted up his voice and sang; it was the cracked voice of the boy of fifteen, and Sally turned round.

"You be quiet, Athelstan, or we shall have a thunder-storm."

In a moment they heard the hum of voices, and in a moment more came upon the pickers. They were all hard at work, talking and laughing as they picked. They sat on chairs, on stools, on boxes, with their baskets by their sides, and some stood by the bin throwing the hops they picked straight into it. There were a lot of children about and a good many babies, some in makeshift cradles, some tucked up in a rug on the soft brown dry earth. The children picked a little and played a great deal. The women worked busily, they had been pickers from childhood, and they could pick twice as fast as foreigners from London. They boasted about the number of bushels they had picked in a day, but they complained you could not make money now as in former times: then they paid you a shilling for five bushels, but now the rate was eight and even nine bushels to the shilling. In the old days a good picker could earn enough in the season to keep her for the rest of the year, but now there was nothing in it; you got a holiday for nothing, and that was about all. Mrs. Hill had bought herself a pianner out of what she made picking, so she said, but she was very near, one wouldn't like to be near like that, and most people thought it was only what she said, if the truth was known perhaps it would be found that she had put a bit of money from the savings bank towards it.

The hoppers were divided into bin companies of ten pickers, not counting children, and Athelny loudly boasted of the day when he would have a company consisting entirely of his own family. Each company had a bin-man, whose duty it was to supply it with strings of hops at their bins; (the bin was a large sack on a wooden frame, about seven feet high, and long rows of them were placed between the rows of hops;) and it was to this position that Athelny

aspired when his family was old enough to form a company. Meanwhile he worked rather by encouraging others than by exertions of his own. He sauntered up to Mrs. Athelny, who had been busy for half an hour and had already emptied a basket into the bin, and with his cigarette between his lips began to pick. He asserted that he was going to pick more than anyone that day, but mother; of course no one could pick so much as mother; that reminded him of the trials which Aphrodite put upon the curious Psyche, and he began to tell his children the story of her love for the unseen bridegroom. He told it very well. It seemed to Philip, listening with a smile on his lips, that the old tale fitted in with the scene. The sky was very blue now, and he thought it could not be more lovely even in Greece. The children with their fair hair and rosy cheeks, strong, healthy, and vivacious; the delicate form of the hops; the challenging emerald of the leaves, like a blare of trumpets; the magic of the green alley, narrowing to a point as you looked down the row, with the pickers in their sun-bonnets: perhaps there was more of the Greek spirit there than you could find in the books of professors or in museums. He was thankful for the beauty of England. He thought of the winding white roads and the hedgerows, the green meadows with their elm-trees, the delicate line of the hills and the copses that crowned them, the flatness of the marshes, and the melancholy of the North Sea. He was very glad that he felt its loveliness. But presently Athelny grew restless and announced that he would go and ask how Robert Kemp's mother was. He knew everyone in the garden and called them all by their Christian names; he knew their family histories and all that had happened to them from birth. With harmless vanity he played the fine gentleman among them, and there was a touch of condescension in his familiarity. Philip would not go with him.

"I'm going to earn my dinner," he said.

"Quite right, my boy," answered Athelny, with a wave of the hand, as he strolled away. "No work, no dinner."

CXIX

PHILIP had not a basket of his own, but sat with Sally. Jane thought it monstrous that he should help her elder sister rather than herself, and he had to promise to pick for her when Sally's basket was full. Sally was almost as quick as her mother.

"Won't it hurt your hands for sewing?" asked Philip.

"Oh, no, it wants soft hands. That's why women pick better than men. If your hands are hard and your fingers all stiff with a lot of rough work you can't pick near so well."

He liked to see her deft movements, and she watched him too now and then with that maternal spirit of hers which was so amusing and yet so charming. He was clumsy at first, and she laughed at him. When she bent over and showed him how best to deal with a whole line their hands met. He was surprised to see her blush. He could not persuade himself that she was a woman; because he had known her as a flapper, he could not help looking upon her as a child still; yet the number of her admirers showed that she was a child no longer; and though they had only been down a few days one of Sally's cousins was already so attentive that she had to endure a lot of chaffing. His name was Peter Gann, and he was the son of Mrs. Athelny's sister, who had married a farmer near Ferne. Everyone knew why he found it necessary to walk through the hop-field every day.

A call-off by the sounding of a horn was made for breakfast at eight, and though Mrs. Athelny told them they had not deserved it, they ate it very heartily. They set to work again and worked till twelve, when the horn sounded once more for dinner. At intervals the measurer went his round from bin to bin, accompanied by the booker, who entered first in his own book and then in the hopper's the number of bushels picked. As each bin was filled it was measured out in bushel baskets into a huge bag called a poke; and this the measurer and the pole-puller carried off between them and put on the waggon. Athelny came back now and then with stories of how much Mrs. Heath or Mrs. Jones had picked, and he conjured his family to beat her: he was always wanting to make records, and sometimes in his enthusiasm picked steadily for an hour. His chief amusement in it, however, was that it showed the beauty of his graceful hands, of which he was excessively proud. He spent much

time manicuring them. He told Philip, as he stretched out his tapering fingers, that the Spanish grandees had always slept in oiled gloves to preserve their whiteness. The hand that wrung the throat of Europe, he remarked dramatically, was as shapely and exquisite as a woman's; and he looked at his own, as he delicately picked the hops, and sighed with self-satisfaction. When he grew tired of this he rolled himself a cigarette and discoursed to Philip of art and literature. In the afternoon it grew very hot. Work did not proceed so actively and conversation halted. The incessant chatter of the morning dwindled now to desultory remarks. Tiny beads of sweat stood on Sally's upper lip, and as she worked her lips were slightly parted. She was like a rosebud bursting into flower.

Calling-off time depended on the state of the oast-house. Sometimes it was filled early, and as many hops had been picked by three or four as could be dried during the night. Then work was stopped. But generally the last measuring of the day began at five. As each company had its bin measured it gathered up its things and, chatting again now that work was over, sauntered out of the garden. The women went back to the huts to clean up and prepare the supper, while a good many of the men strolled down the road to the public-house. A glass of beer was very pleasant after the day's work.

The Athelnys' bin was the last to be dealt with. When the measurer came Mrs. Athelny, with a sigh of relief, stood up and stretched her arms: she had been sitting in the same position for many hours and was stiff.

"Now, let's go to The Jolly Sailor," said Athelny. "The rites of the day must be duly performed, and there is none more sacred than that."

"Take a jug with you, Athelny," said his wife, "and bring back a pint and a half for supper."

She gave him the money, copper by copper. The bar-parlour was already well filled. It had a sanded floor, benches round it, and yellow pictures of Victorian prize-fighters on the walls. The licencee knew all his customers by name, and he leaned over his bar smiling benignly at two young men who were throwing rings on a stick that stood up from the floor: their failure was greeted with a good deal of hearty chaff from the rest of the company. Room was made for the new arrivals. Philip found himself sitting between an old labourer in corduroys, with string tied under his knees, and a shiny-faced lad of seventeen with a love-lock neatly plastered on his red forehead. Athelny insisted on trying his hand at the

throwing of rings. He backed himself for half a pint and won it. As he drank the loser's health he said:

"I would sooner have won this than won the Derby, my boy."

He was an outlandish figure, with his wide-brimmed hat and pointed beard, among those country folk, and it was easy to see that they thought him very queer; but his spirits were so high, his enthusiasm so contagious, that it was impossible not to like him. Conversation went easily. A certain number of pleasantries were exchanged in the broad, slow accent of the Isle of Thanet, and there was uproarious laughter at the sallies of the local wag. A pleasant gathering! It would have been a hard-hearted person who did not feel a glow of satisfaction in his fellows. Philip's eyes wandered out of the window where it was bright and sunny still; there were little white curtains in it tied up with red ribbon like those of a cottage window, and on the sill were pots of geraniums. In due course one by one the idlers got up and sauntered back to the meadow where supper was cooking.

"I expect you'll be ready for your bed," said Mrs. Athelny to Philip. "You're not used to getting up at five and staying in the open air all day."

"You're coming to bathe with us, Uncle Phil, aren't you?" the boys cried.

"Rather."

He was tired and happy. After suppper, balancing himself against the wall of the hut on a chair without a back, he smoked his pipe and looked at the night. Sally was busy. She passed in and out of the hut, and he lazily watched her methodical actions. Her walk attracted his notice; it was not particularly graceful, but it was easy and assured; she swung her legs from the hips, and her feet seemed to tread the earth with decision. Athelny had gone off to gossip with one of the neighbours, and presently Philip heard his wife address the world in general.

"There now, I'm out of tea and I wanted Athelny to go down to Mrs. Black's and get some." A pause, and then her voice was raised: "Sally, just run down to Mrs. Black's and get me half a pound of tea, will you? I've run quite out of it."

"All right, mother."

Mrs. Black had a cottage about half a mile along the road, and she combined the office of postmistress with that of universal provider. Sally came out of the hut, turning down her sleeves.

"Shall I come with you, Sally?" asked Philip.

"Don't you trouble. I'm not afraid to go alone."

"I didn't think you were; but it's getting near my bed-time, and I was just thinking I'd like to stretch my legs."

Sally did not answer, and they set out together. The road was white and silent. There was not a sound in the summer night They did not speak much.

"It's quite hot even now, isn't it?" said Philip.

"I think it's wonderful for the time of year."

But their silence did not seem awkward. They found it was pleasant to walk side by side and felt no need of words. Suddenly at a stile in the hedgerow they heard a low murmur of voices, and in the darkness they saw the outline of two people. They were sitting very close to one another and did not move as Philip and Sally passed.

"I wonder who that was," said Sally.

"They looked happy enough, didn't they?"

"I expect they took us for lovers too."

They saw the light of the cottage in front of them, and in a minute went into the little shop. The glare dazzled them for a moment.

"You are late," said Mrs. Black. "I was just going to shut up." She looked at the clock. "Getting on for nine."

Sally asked for her half pound of tea, (Mrs. Athelny could never bring herself to buy more than half a pound at a time,) and they set off up the road again. Now and then some beast of the night made a short, sharp sound, but it seemed only to make the silence more marked.

"I believe if you stood still you could hear the sea," said Sally.

They strained their ears, and their fancy presented them with a faint sound of little waves lapping up against the shingle. When they passed the stile again the lovers were still there, but now they were not speaking; they were in one another's arms, and the man's lips were pressed against the girl's.

"They seem busy," said Sally.

They turned a corner, and a breath of warm wind beat for a moment against their faces. The earth gave forth its freshness. There was something strange in the tremulous night, and something, you knew not what, seemed to be waiting; the silence was on a sudden pregnant with meaning. Philip had a queer feeling in his heart, it seemed very full, it seemed to melt, (the hackneyed phrases expressed precisely the curious sensation,) he felt happy and anxious and expectant. To his memory came back those lines in which Jessica and Lorenzo murmur melodious words to one another, capping each other's utterance; but passion shines bright and clear through the conceits that amuse them. He did not know

what there was in the air that made his senses so strangely alert; it seemed to him that he was pure soul to enjoy the scents and the sounds and the savours of the earth. He had never felt such an exquisite capacity for beauty. He was afraid that Sally by speaking would break the spell, but she said never a word, and he wanted to hear the sound of her voice. Its low richness was the voice of the country night itself.

They arrived at the field through which she had to walk to get back to the huts. Philip went in to hold the gate open for her.

"Well, here I think I'll say good-night."

"Thank you for coming all that way with me."

She gave him her hand, and as he took it, he said:

"If you were very nice you'd kiss me good-night like the rest of the family."

"I don't mind," she said.

Philip had spoken in jest. He merely wanted to kiss her, because he was happy and he liked her and the night was so lovely.

"Good-night then," he said, with a little laugh, drawing her towards him.

She gave him her lips; they were warm and full and soft; he lingered a little, they were like a flower; then, he knew not how, without meaning it, he flung his arms round her. She yielded quite silently. Her body was firm and strong. He felt her heart beat against his. Then he lost his head. His senses overwhelmed him like a flood of rushing waters. He drew her into the darker shadow of the hedge.

CXX

Philip slept like a log and awoke with a start to find Harold tickling his face with a feather. There was a shout of delight when he opened his eyes. He was drunken with sleep.

"Come on, lazy bones," said Jane. "Sally says she won't wait for you unless you hurry up."

Then he remembered what had happened. His heart sank, and, half out of bed already, he stopped; he did not know how he was going to face her; he was overwhelmed with a sudden rush of self-reproach, and bitterly, bitterly, he regretted what he had done. What would she say to him that morning? He dreaded meeting her, and he asked himself how he could have been such a fool. But the children gave him no time; Edward took his bathing-drawers and his towel, Athelstan tore the bed-clothes away; and in three minutes they all clattered down into the road. Sally gave him a smile. It was as sweet and innocent as it had ever been.

"You do take a time to dress yourself," she said. "I thought you was never coming."

There was not a particle of difference in her manner. He had expected some change, subtle or abrupt; he fancied that there would be shame in the way she treated him, or anger, or perhaps some increase of familiarity; but there was nothing. She was exactly the same as before. They walked towards the sea all together, talking and laughing; and Sally was quiet, but she was always that, reserved, but he had never seen her otherwise, and gentle. She neither sought conversation with him nor avoided it. Philip was astounded. He had expected the incident of the night before to have caused some revolution in her, but it was just as though nothing had happened; it might have been a dream; and as he walked along, a little girl holding on to one hand and a little boy to the other, while he chatted as unconcernedly as he could, he sought for an explanation. He wondered whether Sally meant the affair to be forgotten. Perhaps her senses had run away with her just as his had, and, treating what had occurred as an accident due to unusual circumstances, it might be that she had decided to put the matter out of her mind. It was ascribing to her a power of thought and a mature wisdom which fitted neither with her age nor with her character. But he realised that he knew nothing of her. There had been in her always something enigmatic.

They played leap-frog in the water, and the bathe was as uproarious as on the previous day. Sally mothered them all, keeping a watchful eye on them, and calling to them when they went out too far. She swam staidly backwards and forwards while the others got up to their larks, and now and then turned on her back to float. Presently she went out and began drying herself; she called to the others more or less peremptorily, and at last only Philip was left in the water. He took the opportunity to have a good hard swim. He was more used to the cold water this second morning, and he revelled in its salt freshness; it rejoiced him to use his limbs freely, and he covered the water with long, firm strokes. But Sally, with a towel round her, went down to the water's edge.

"You're to come out this minute, Philip," she called, as though he were a small boy under her charge.

And when, smiling with amusement at her authoritative way, he came towards her, she upbraided him.

"It is naughty of you to stay in so long. Your lips are quite blue, and just look at your teeth, they're chattering."

"All right. I'll come out."

She had never talked to him in that manner before. It was as though what had happened gave her a sort of right over him, and she looked upon him as a child to be cared for. In a few minutes they were dressed, and they started to walk back. Sally noticed his hands.

"Just look, they're quite blue."

"Oh, that's all right. It's only the circulation. I shall get the blood back in a minute."

"Give them to me."

She took his hands in hers and rubbed them, first one and then the other, till the colour returned. Philip, touched and puzzled, watched her. He could not say anything to her on account of the children, and he did not meet her eyes; but he was sure they did not avoid his purposely, it just happened that they did not meet. And during the day there was nothing in her behaviour to suggest a consciousness in her that anything had passed between them. Perhaps she was a little more talkative than usual. When they were all sitting again in the hop-field she told her mother how naughty Philip had been in not coming out of the water till he was blue with cold. It was incredible, and yet it seemed that the only effect of the incident of the night before was to arouse in her a feeling of protection towards him: she had the same instinctive desire to mother him as she had with regard to her brothers and sisters.

It was not till the evening that he found himself alone with her. She was cooking the supper, and Philip was sitting on the grass by the side of the fire. Mrs. Athelny had gone down to the village to do some shopping, and the children were scattered in various pursuits of their own. Philip hesitated to speak. He was very nervous. Sally attended to her business with serene competence, and she accepted placidly the silence which to him was so embarrassing. He did not know how to begin. Sally seldom spoke unless she was spoken to or had something particular to say. At last he could not bear it any longer.

"You're not angry with me, Sally?" he blurted out suddenly.

She raised her eyes quietly and looked at him without emotion

"Me? No. Why should I be?"

He was taken aback and did not reply. She took the lid off the pot, stirred the contents, and put it on again. A savoury smell spread over the air. She looked at him once more, with a quiet smile which barely separated her lips; it was more a smile of the eyes.

"I always liked you," she said.

His heart gave a great thump against his ribs, and he felt the blood rushing to his cheeks. He forced a faint laugh.

"I didn't know that."

"That's because you're a silly."

"I don't know why you liked me."

"I don't either." She put a little more wood on the fire. "I knew I liked you that day you came when you'd been sleeping out and hadn't had anything to eat, d'you remember? And me and mother, we got Thorpy's bed ready for you."

He flushed again, for he did not know that she was aware of that incident. He remembered it himself with horror and shame.

"That's why I wouldn't have anything to do with the others. You remember that young fellow mother wanted me to have? I let him come to tea because he bothered so, but I knew I'd say no."

Philip was so surprised that he found nothing to say. There was a queer feeling in his heart; he did not know what it was, unless it was happiness. Sally stirred the pot once more.

"I wish those children would make haste and come. I don't know where they've got to. Supper's ready now."

"Shall I go and see if I can find them?" said Philip.

It was a relief to talk about practical things.

"Well, it wouldn't be a bad idea, I must say. . . . There's mother coming."

Then, as he got up, she looked at him without embarrassment.

"Shall I come for a walk with you tonight when I've put the children to bed?"

"Yes."

"Well, you wait for me down by the stile, and I'll come when I'm ready."

He waited under the stars, sitting on the stile, and the hedges with their ripening blackberries were high on each side of him. From the earth rose rich scents of the night, and the air was soft and still. His heart was beating madly. He could not understand anything of what happened to him. He associated passion with cries and tears and vehemence, and there was nothing of this in Sally; but he did not know what else but passion could have caused her to give herself. But passion for him? He would not have been surprised if she had fallen to her cousin, Peter Gann, tall, spare, and straight, with his sunburned face and long, easy stride. Philip wondered what she saw in him. He did not know if she loved him as he reckoned love. And yet? He was convinced of her purity. He had a vague inkling that many things had combined, things that she felt though was unconscious of, the intoxication of the air and the hops and the night, the healthy instincts of the natural woman, a tenderness that overflowed, and an affection that had in it something maternal and something sisterly; and she gave all she had to give because her heart was full of charity.

He heard a step on the road, and a figure came out of the darkness.

"Sally," he murmured.

She stopped and came to the stile, and with her came sweet, clean odours of the country-side. She seemed to carry with her scents of the new-mown hay, and the savour of ripe hops, and the freshness of young grass. Her lips were soft and full against his, and her lovely, strong body was firm within his arms.

"Milk and honey," he said. "You're like milk and honey."

He made her close her eyes and kissed her eyelids, first one and then the other. Her arm, strong and muscular, was bare to the elbow; he passed his hand over it and wondered at its beauty; it gleamed in the darkness; she had the skin that Rubens painted, astonishingly fair and transparent, and on one side were little golden hairs. It was the arm of a Saxon goddess; but no immortal had that exquisite, homely naturalness; and Philip thought of a cottage garden with the dear flowers which bloom in all men's hearts, of the hollyhock and the red and white rose which is called York and

Lancaster, and of love-in-a-mist and Sweet William, and honeysuckle, larkspur, and London Pride.

"How can you care for me?" he said. "I'm insignificant and crippled and ordinary and ugly."

She took his face in both her hands and kissed his lips.

"You're an old silly, that's what you are," she said.

CXXI

When the hops were picked, Philip with the news in his pocket that he had got the appointment as assistant house-physician at St. Luke's, accompanied the Athelnys back to London. He took modest rooms in Westminster and at the beginning of October entered upon his duties. The work was interesting and varied; every day he learned something new; he felt himself of some consequence; and he saw a good deal of Sally. He found life uncommonly pleasant. He was free about six, except on the days on which he had out-patients, and then he went to the shop at which Sally worked to meet her when she came out. There were several young men, who hung about opposite the 'trade entrance' or a little further along, at the first corner; and the girls, coming out two and two or in little groups, nudged one another and giggled as they recognised them. Sally in her plain black dress looked very different from the country lass who had picked hops side by side with him. She walked away from the shop quickly, but she slackened her pace when they met, and greeted him with her quiet smile. They walked together through the busy street. He talked to her of his work at the hospital, and she told him what she had been doing in the shop that day. He came to know the names of the girls she worked with. He found that Sally had a restrained, but keen, sense of the ridiculous, and she made remarks about the girls or the men who were set over them which amused him by their unexpected drollery. She had a way of saying a thing which was very characteristic, quite gravely, as though there were nothing funny in it at all, and yet it was so sharp-sighted that Philip broke into delighted laughter. Then she would give him a little glance in which the smiling eyes showed she was not unaware of her own humour. They met with a handshake and parted as formally. Once Philip asked her to come and have tea with him in his rooms, but she refused.

"No, I won't do that. It would look funny."

Never a word of love passed between them. She seemed not to desire anything more than the companionship of those walks. Yet Philip was positive that she was glad to be with him. She puzzled him as much as she had done at the beginning. He did not begin to understand her conduct; but the more he knew her the fonder he grew of her; she was competent and self-controlled, and there

was a charming honesty in her: you felt that you could rely upon her in every circumstance.

"You are an awfully good sort," he said to her once *à propos* of nothing at all.

"I expect I'm just the same as everyone else," she answered.

He knew that he did not love her. It was a great affection that he felt for her, and he liked her company; it was curiously soothing; and he had a feeling for her which seemed to him ridiculous to entertain towards a shop-girl of nineteen: he respected her. And he admired her magnificent healthiness. She was a splendid animal, without defect; and physical perfection filled him always with admiring awe. She made him feel unworthy.

Then, one day, about three weeks after they had come back to London as they walked together, he noticed that she was unusually silent. The serenity of her expression was altered by a slight line between the eyebrows: it was the beginning of a frown.

"What's the matter, Sally?" he asked.

She did not look at him, but straight in front of her, and her colour darkened.

"I don't know."

He understood at once what she meant. His heart gave a sudden, quick beat, and he felt the colour leave his cheeks.

"What d'you mean? Are you afraid that . . .?"

He stopped. He could not go on. The possibility that anything of the sort could happen had never crossed his mind. Then he saw that her lips were trembling, and she was trying not to cry.

"I'm not certain yet. Perhaps it'll be all right."

They walked on in silence till they came to the corner of Chancery Lane, where he always left her. She held out her hand and smiled.

"Don't worry about it yet. Let's hope for the best."

He walked away with a tumult of thoughts in his head. What a fool he had been! That was the first thing that struck him, an abject, miserable fool, and he repeated it to himself a dozen times in a rush of angry feeling. He despised himself. How could he have got into such a mess? But at the same time, for his thoughts chased one another through his brain and yet seemed to stand together, in a hopeless confusion, like the pieces of a jig-saw puzzle seen in a nightmare, he asked himself what he was going to do. Everything was so clear before him, all he had aimed at so long within reach at last, and now his inconceivable stupidity had erected this new obstacle. Philip had never been able to surmount what he acknowledged was a defect in his resolute desire for a well-

ordered life, and that was his passion for living in the future; and no sooner was he settled in his work at the hospital than he had busied himself with arrangements for his travels. In the past he had often tried not to think too circumstantially of his plans for the future, it was only discouraging; but now that his goal was so near he saw no harm in giving away to a longing that was so difficult to resist. First of all he meant to go to Spain. That was the land of his heart; and by now he was imbued with its spirit, its romance and colour and history and grandeur; he felt that it had a message for him in particular which no other country could give. He knew the fine old cities already as though he had trodden their tortuous streets from childhood, Cordova, Seville, Toledo, Leon, Tarragona, Burgos. The great painters of Spain were the painters of his soul, and his pulse beat quickly as he pictured his ecstasy on standing face to face with those works which were more significant than any others to his own tortured, restless heart. He had read the great poets, more characteristic of their race than the poets of other lands; for they seemed to have drawn their inspiration not at all from the general currents of the world's literature but directly from the torrid, scented plains and the bleak mountains of their country. A few short months now, and he would hear with his own ears all around him the language which seemed most apt for grandeur of soul and passion. His fine taste had given him an inkling that Andalusia was too soft and sensuous, a little vulgar even, to satisfy his ardour; and his imagination dwelt more willingly among the wind-swept distances of Castile and the rugged magnificence of Aragon and Leon. He did not know quite what those unknown contacts would give him, but he felt that he would gather from them a strength and a purpose which would make him more capable of affronting and comprehending the manifold wonders of places more distant and more strange.

For this was only a beginning. He had got into communication with the various companies which took surgeons out on their ships, and knew exactly what were their routes, and from men who had been on them what were the advantages and disadvantages of each line. He put aside the Orient and the P. & O. It was difficult to get a berth with them; and besides their passenger traffic allowed the medical officer little freedom; but there were other services which sent large tramps on leisurely expeditions to the East, stopping at all sorts of ports for various periods, from a day or two to a fortnight, so that you had plenty of time, and it was often possible to make a trip inland. The pay was poor and the food no more than adequate, so that there was not much demand for the

posts, and a man with a London degree was pretty sure to get one if he applied. Since there were no passengers other than a casual man or so, shipping on business from some out-of-the-way port to another, the life on board was friendly and pleasant. Philip knew by heart the list of places at which they touched; and each one called up in him visions of tropical sunshine, and magic colour, and of a teeming, mysterious, intense life. Life! That was what he wanted. At last he would come to close quarters with life. And perhaps, from Tokio or Shanghai it would be possible to tranship into some other line and drop down to the islands of the South Pacific. A doctor was useful anywhere. There might be an opportunity to go up country in Burmah, and what rich jungles in Sumatra or Borneo might he not visit? He was young still and time was no object to him. He had no ties in England, no friends; he could go up and down the world for years, learning the beauty and the wonder and the variedness of life.

Now this thing had come. He put aside the possibility that Sally was mistaken; he felt strangely certain that she was right; after all, it was so likely; anyone could see that Nature had built her to be the mother of children. He knew what he ought to do. He ought not to let the incident divert him a hair's breadth from his path. He thought of Griffiths; he could easily imagine with what indifference that young man would have received such a piece of news; he would have thought it an awful nuisance and would at once have taken to his heels, like a wise fellow; he would have left the girl to deal with her troubles as best she could. Philip told himself that if this had happened it was because it was inevitable. He was no more to blame than Sally; she was a girl who knew the world and the facts of life, and she had taken the risk with her eyes open. It would be madness to allow such an accident to disturb the whole pattern of his life. He was one of the few people who was acutely conscious of the transitoriness of life, and how necessary it was to make the most of it. He would do what he could for Sally; he could afford to give her a sufficient sum of money. A strong man would never allow himself to be turned from his purpose.

Philip said all this to himself, but he knew he could not do it. He simply could not. He knew himself.

"I'm so damned weak," he muttered despairingly.

She had trusted him and been kind to him. He simply could not do a thing which, notwithstanding all his reason, he felt was horrible. He knew he would have no peace on his travels if he had the thought constantly with him that she was wretched. Besides, there

were her father and mother: they had always treated him well; it was not possible to repay them with ingratitude. The only thing was to marry Sally as quickly as possible. He would write to Doctor South, tell him he was going to be married at once, and say that if his offer still held he was willing to accept it. That sort of practice, among poor people, was the only one possible for him; there his deformity did not matter, and they would not sneer at the simple manners of his wife. It was curious to think of her as his wife, it gave him a queer, soft feeling; and a wave of emotion spread over him as he thought of the child which was his. He had little doubt that Doctor South would be glad to have him, and he pictured to himself the life he would lead with Sally in the fishing village. They would have a little house within sight of the sea, and he would watch the mighty ships passing to the lands he would never know. Perhaps that was the wisest thing. Cronshaw had told him that the facts of life mattered nothing to him who by the power of fancy held in fee the twin realms of space and time. It was true. *Forever wilt thou love and she be fair!*

His wedding present to his wife would be all his high hopes. Self-sacrifice! Philip was uplifted by its beauty, and all through the evening he thought of it. He was so excited that he could not read. He seemed to be driven out of his rooms into the streets, and he walked up and down Birdcage Walk, his heart throbbing with joy. He could hardly bear his impatience. He wanted to see Sally's happiness when he made her his offer, and if it had not been so late he would have gone to her there and then. He pictured to himself the long evenings he would spend with Sally in the cosy sitting-room, the blinds undrawn so that they could watch the sea; he with his books, while she bent over her work, and the shaded lamp made her sweet face more fair. They would talk over the growing child, and when she turned her eyes to his there was in them the light of love. And the fishermen and their wives who were his patients would come to feel a great affection for them, and they in their turn would enter into the pleasures and pains of those simple lives. But his thoughts returned to the son who would be his and hers. Already he felt in himself a passionate devotion to it. He thought of passing his hands over his little perfect limbs, he knew he would be beautiful; and he would make over to him all his dreams of a rich and varied life. And thinking over the long pilgrimage of his past he accepted it joyfully. He accepted the deformity which had made life so hard for him; he knew that it had warped his character, but now he saw also that by reason of it he had acquired that power of introspection which had given him

so much delight. Without it he would never have had his keen appreciation of beauty, his passion for art and literature, and his interest in the varied spectacle of life. The ridicule and the contempt which had so often been heaped upon him had turned his mind inward and called forth those flowers which he felt would never lose their fragrance. Then he saw that the normal was the rarest thing in the world. Everyone had some defect, of body or of mind: he thought of all the people he had known, (the whole world was like a sick-house, and there was no rhyme or reason in it,) he saw a long procession, deformed in body and warped in mind, some with illness of the flesh, weak hearts or weak lungs, and some with illness of the spirit, languor of will, or a craving for liquor. At this moment he could feel a holy compassion for them all. They were the helpless instruments of blind chance. He could pardon Griffiths for his treachery and Mildred for the pain she had caused him. They could not help themselves. The only reasonable thing was to accept the good of men and be patient with their faults. The words of the dying God crossed his memory:

Forgive them, for they know not what they do.

CXXII

He had arranged to meet Sally on Saturday in the National Gallery. She was to come there as soon as she was released from the shop and had agreed to lunch with him. Two days had passed since he had seen her, and his exultation had not left him for a moment. It was because he rejoiced in the feeling that he had not attempted to see her. He had repeated to himself exactly what he would say to her and how he should say it. Now his impatience was unbearable. He had written to Doctor South and had in his pocket a telegram from him received that morning: *"Sacking the mumpish fool. When will you come?"* Philip walked along Parliament Street. It was a fine day, and there was a bright, frosty sun which made the light dance in the street. It was crowded. There was a tenuous mist in the distance, and it softened exquisitely the noble lines of the buildings. He crossed Trafalgar Square. Suddenly his heart gave a sort of twist in his body; he saw a woman in front of him who he thought was Mildred. She had the same figure, and she walked with that slight dragging of the feet which was so characteristic of her. Without thinking, but with a beating heart, he hurried till he came alongside, and then, when the woman turned, he saw it was someone unknown to him. It was the face of a much older person, with a lined, yellow skin. He slackened his pace. He was infinitely relieved, but it was not only relief that he felt; it was disappointment too; he was seized with horror of himself. Would he never be free from that passion? At the bottom of his heart, notwithstanding everything, he felt that a strange, desperate thirst for that vile woman would always linger. That love had caused him so much suffering that he knew he would never, never quite be free of it. Only death could finally assuage his desire.

But he wrenched the pang from his heart. He thought of Sally, with her kind blue eyes; and his lips unconsciously formed themselves into a smile. He walked up the steps of the National Gallery and sat down in the first room, so that he should see her the moment she came in. It always comforted him to get among pictures. He looked at none in particular, but allowed the magnificence of their colour, the beauty of their lines, to work upon his soul. His imagination was busy with Sally. It would be pleasant to take her away from that London in which she seemed an unusual

figure, like a cornflower in a shop among orchids and azaleas; he had learned in the Kentish hop-field that she did not belong to the town; and he was sure that she would blossom under the soft skies of Dorset to a rarer beauty. She came in, and he got up to meet her. She was in black, with white cuffs at her wrists and a lawn collar round her neck. They shook hands.

"Have you been waiting long?"

"No. Ten minutes. Are you hungry?"

"Not very."

"Let's sit here for a bit, shall we?"

"If you like."

They sat quietly, side by side, without speaking. Philip enjoyed having her near him. He was warmed by her radiant health. A glow of life seemed like an aureole to shine about her.

"Well, how have you been?" he said at last, with a little smile.

"Oh, it's all right. It was a false alarm."

"Was it?"

"Aren't you glad?"

An extraordinary sensation filled him. He had felt certain that Sally's suspicion was well-founded; it had never occurred to him for an instant that there was a possibility of error. All his plans were suddenly overthrown, and the existence, so elaborately pictured, was no more than a dream which would never be realised. He was free once more. Free! He need give up none of his projects, and life still was in his hands for him to do what he liked with. He felt no exhilaration, but only dismay. His heart sank. The future stretched out before him in desolate emptiness. It was as though he had sailed for many years over a great waste of waters, with peril and privation, and at last had come upon a fair haven, but as he was about to enter, some contrary wind had arisen and drove him out again into the open sea; and because he had let his mind dwell on these soft meads and pleasant woods of the land, the vast deserts of the ocean filled him with anguish. He could not confront again the loneliness and the tempest. Sally looked at him with her clear eyes.

"Aren't you glad?" she asked again. "I thought you'd be as pleased as Punch."

He met her gaze haggardly.

"I'm not sure," he muttered.

"You are funny. Most men would."

He realised that he had deceived himself; it was no self-sacrifice that had driven him to think of marrying, but the desire for a wife and a home and love; and now that it all seemed to slip through

his fingers he was seized with despair. He wanted all that more than anything in the world. What did he care for Spain and its cities, Cordova, Toledo, Leon; what to him were the pagodas of Burmah and the lagoons of South Sea Islands? America was here and now. It seemed to him that all his life he had followed the ideals that other people, by their words or their writings, had instilled into him, and never the desires of his own heart. Always his course had been swayed by what he thought he should do and never by what he wanted with his whole soul to do. He put all that aside now with a gesture of impatience. He had lived always in the future, and the present always, always had slipped through his fingers. His ideals? He thought of his desire to make a design, intricate and beautiful, out of the myriad, meaningless facts of life: had he not seen also that the simplest pattern, that in which a man was born, worked, married, had children, and died, was likewise the most perfect? It might be that to surrender to happiness was to accept defeat, but it was a defeat better than many victories.

He glanced quickly at Sally, he wondered what she was thinking, and then looked away again.

"I was going to ask you to marry me," he said.

"I thought p'raps you might, but I shouldn't have liked to stand in your way."

"You wouldn't have done that."

"How about your travels, Spain and all that?"

"How d'you know I want to travel?"

"I ought to know something about it. I've heard you and Dad talk about it till you were blue in the face."

"I don't care a damn about all that." He paused for an instant and then spoke in a low, hoarse whisper. "I don't want to leave you! I can't leave you."

She did not answer. He could not tell what she thought.

"I wonder if you'll marry me, Sally."

She did not move and there was no flicker of emotion on her face, but she did not look at him when she answered.

"If you like."

"Don't you want to?"

"Oh, of course I'd like to have a house of my own, and it's about time I was settling down."

He smiled a little. He knew her pretty well by now, and her manner did not surprise him.

"But don't you want to marry *me?*"

"There's no one else I would marry."

"Then that settles it."

"Mother and Dad will be surprised, won't they?"

"I'm so happy."

"I want my lunch," she said.

"Dear!"

He smiled and took her hand and pressed it. They got up and walked out of the gallery. They stood for a moment at the balustrade and looked at Trafalgar Square. Cabs and omnibuses hurried to and fro, and crowds passed, hastening in every direction, and the sun was shining.

WHERE THE BLUE BEGINS

A NOVEL BY

Christopher Morley

THIS brilliant, wise, humorous, and tender phantasy of the dog Gissing's search for God, is one of the books upon which Morley's fame will rest.

TO FELIX AND TOTO

"I am not free –
And it may be
Life is too tight around my shins;
For, unlike you,
I can't break through,
A truant where the blue begins.

"Out of the very element
Of bondage, that here holds me pent,
I'll make my furious sonnet.
I'll turn my noose
To tightrope use
And madly dance upon it.

"So I will take
My leash, and make
A wilder and more subtle fleeing—
And I shall be
More escapading and more free
Than you have ever dreamed of being!"

CHAPTER ONE

GISSING lived alone (except for his Japanese butler) in a little house in the country, in that woodland suburb region called the Canine Estates. He lived comfortably and thoughtfully, as bachelors often do. He came of a respectable family, who had always conducted themselves calmly and without too much argument. They had bequeathed him just enough income to live on cheerfully, without display but without having to do addition and subtraction at the end of the month and then tear up the paper lest Fuji (the butler) should see it.

It was strange, since Gissing was so pleasantly situated in life, that he got into these curious adventures that I have to relate. I do not attempt to explain it.

He had no responsibilities, not even a motor car, for his tastes were surprisingly simple. If

he happened to be spending an evening at the country club, and a rainstorm came down, he did not worry about getting home. He would sit by the fire and chuckle to see the married members creep away one by one. He would get out his pipe and sleep that night at the club, after telephoning Fuji not to sit up for him. When he felt like it he used to read in bed, and even smoke in bed. When he went to town to the theatre, he would spend the night at a hotel to avoid the fatigue of the long ride on the 11:44 train. He chose a different hotel each time, so that it was always an Adventure. He had a great deal of fun.

But having fun is not quite the same as being happy. Even an income of 1000 bones a year does not answer all questions. That charming little house among the groves and thickets seemed to him surrounded by strange whispers and quiet voices. He was uneasy. He was restless, and did not know why. It was his theory that discipline must be maintained in the household, so he did not tell Fuji his feelings. Even when he was alone, he always kept up a certain formality in the domestic routine. Fuji would lay out his dinner jacket on the bed: he dressed, came down

to the dining room with quiet dignity, and the evening meal was served by candle-light. As long as Fuji was at work, Gissing sat carefully in the armchair by the hearth, smoking a cigar and pretending to read the paper. But as soon as the butler had gone upstairs, Gissing always kicked off his dinner suit and stiff shirt, and lay down on the hearth-rug. But he did not sleep. He would watch the wings of flame gilding the dark throat of the chimney, and his mind seemed drawn upward on that rush of light, up into the pure chill air where the moon was riding among sluggish thick floes of cloud. In the darkness he heard chiming voices, wheedling and tantalizing. One night he was walking on his little verandah. Between rafts of silver-edged clouds were channels of ocean-blue sky, inconceivably deep and transparent. The air was serene, with a faint acid taste. Suddenly there shrilled a soft, sweet, melancholy whistle, earnestly repeated. It seemed to come from the little pond in the near-by copses. It struck him strangely. It might be anything, he thought. He ran furiously through the field, and to the brim of the pond. He could find nothing, all was silent. Then the whistlings broke

out again, all round him, maddeningly. This kept on, night after night. The parson, whom he consulted, said it was only frogs; but Gissing told the constable he thought God had something to do with it.

Then willow trees and poplars showed a pallid bronze sheen, forsythias were as yellow as scrambled eggs, maples grew knobby with red buds. Among the fresh bright grass came, here and there, exhilarating smells of last year's buried bones. The little upward slit at the back of Gissing's nostrils felt prickly. He thought that if he could bury it deep enough in cold beef broth it would be comforting. Several times he went out to the pantry intending to try the experiment, but every time Fuji happened to be around. Fuji was a Japanese pug, and rather correct, so Gissing was ashamed to do what he wanted to. He pretended he had come out to see that the ice-box pan had been emptied properly.

"I must get the plumber to put in a pukka drain-pipe to take the place of the pan," Gissing said to Fuji; but he knew that he had no intention of doing so. The ice-box pan was his private test of a good servant. A cook who forgot to

empty it was too careless, he thought, to be a real success.

But certainly there was some curious elixir in the air. He went for walks, and as soon as he was out of sight of the houses he threw down his hat and stick and ran wildly, with great exultation, over the hills and fields. "I really ought to turn all this energy into some sort of constructive work," he said to himself. No one else, he mused, seemed to enjoy life as keenly and eagerly as he did. He wondered, too, about the other sex. Did they feel these violent impulses to run, to shout, to leap and caper in the sunlight? But he was a little startled, on one of his expeditions, to see in the distance the curate rushing hotly through the underbrush, his clerical vestments dishevelled, his tongue hanging out with excitement.

"I must go to church more often," said Gissing.

In the golden light and pringling air he felt excitable and high-strung. His tail curled upward until it ached. Finally he asked Mike Terrier, who lived next door, what was wrong.

"It's spring," Mike said.

"Oh, yes, of course, jolly old spring!" said

Gissing, as though this was something he had known all along, and had just forgotten for the moment. But he didn't know. This was his first spring, for he was only ten months old.

Outwardly he was the brisk, genial figure that the suburb knew and esteemed. He was something of a mystery among his neighbours of the Canine Estates, because he did not go daily to business in the city, as most of them did; nor did he lead a life of brilliant amusement like the Airedales, the wealthy people whose great house was near by. Mr. Poodle, the conscientious curate, had called several times but was not able to learn anything definite. There was a little card-index of parishioners, which it was Mr. Poodle's duty to fill in with details of each person's business, charitable inclinations, and what he could do to amuse a Church Sociable. The card allotted to Gissing was marked, in Mr. Poodle's neat script, *Friendly, but vague as to definite participation in Xian activities. Has not communicated.*

But in himself, Gissing was increasingly disturbed. Even his seizures of joy, which came as he strolled in the smooth spring air and sniffed the wild, vigorous aroma of the woodland earth,

were troublesome because he did not know why he was so glad. Every morning it seemed to him that life was about to exhibit some delicious crisis in which the meaning and excellence of all things would plainly appear. He sang in the bathtub. Daily it became more difficult to maintain that decorum which Fuji expected. He felt that his life was being wasted. He wondered what ought to be done about it.

CHAPTER TWO

IT WAS after dinner, an April evening, and Gissing slipped away from the house for a stroll. He was afraid to stay in, because he knew that if he did, Fuji would ask him again to fix the dishcloth rack in the kitchen. Fuji was very short in stature, and could not reach up to the place where the rack was screwed over the sink. Like all people whose minds are very active, Gissing hated to attend to little details like this. It was a weakness in his character. Fuji had asked him six times to fix the rack, but Gissing always pretended to forget about it. To appease his methodical butler he had written on a piece of paper *Fix Dishcloth Rack* and pinned it on his dressing-table pincushion; but he paid no attention to the memorandum.

He went out into a green April dusk. Down by the pond piped those repeated treble whistlings: they still distressed him with a mysterious

unriddled summons, but Mike Terrier had told him that the secret of respectability is to ignore whatever you don't understand. Careful observation of this maxim had somewhat dulled the cry of that shrill queer music. It now caused only a faint pain in his mind. Still, he walked that way because the little meadow by the pond was agreeably soft underfoot. Also, when he walked close beside the water the voices were silent. That is worth noting, he said to himself. If you go directly at the heart of a mystery, it ceases to be a mystery, and becomes only a question of drainage. (Mr. Poodle had told him that if he had the pond and swamp drained, the frog-song would not annoy him.) But to-night, when the keen chirruping ceased, there was still another sound that did not cease—a faint, appealing cry. It caused a prickling on his shoulder blades, it made him both angry and tender. He pushed through the bushes. In a little hollow were three small puppies, whining faintly. They were cold and draggled with mud. Someone had left them there, evidently, to perish. They were huddled close together; their eyes, a cloudy unspeculative blue, were only just opened.

"This is gruesome," said Gissing, pretending to be shocked. "Dear me, innocent pledges of sin, I dare say. Well, there is only one thing to do."

He picked them up carefully and carried them home.

"Quick, Fuji!" he said. "Warm some milk, some of the Grade A, and put a little brandy in it. I'll get the spare-room bed ready."

He rushed upstairs, wrapped the puppies in a blanket, and turned on the electric heater to take the chill from the spare-room. The little pads of their paws were ice-cold, and he filled the hot water bottle and held it carefully to their twelve feet. Their pink stomachs throbbed, and at first he feared they were dying. "They *must* not die!" he said fiercely. "If they did, it would be a matter for the police, and no end of trouble."

Fuji came up with the milk, and looked very grave when he saw the muddy footprints on the clean sheet.

"Now, Fuji," said Gissing, "do you suppose they can lap, or will we have to pour it down?"

In spite of his superior manner, Fuji was a good fellow in an emergency. It was he who

suggested the fountain-pen filler. They washed the ink out of it, and used it to drip the hot brandy-and-milk down the puppies' throats. Their noses, which had been icy, suddenly became very hot and dry. Gissing feared a fever and thought their temperatures should be taken.

"The only thermometer we have," he said, "is the one on the porch, with the mercury split in two. I don't suppose that would do. Have you a clinical thermometer, Fuji?"

Fuji felt that his employer was making too much fuss over the matter.

"No, sir," he said firmly. "They are quite all right. A good sleep will revive them. They will be as fit as possible in the morning."

Fuji went out into the garden to brush the mud from his neat white jacket. His face was inscrutable. Gissing sat by the spare-room bed until he was sure the puppies were sleeping correctly. He closed the door so that Fuji would not hear him humming a lullaby. Three Blind Mice was the only nursery song he could remember, and he sang it over and over again.

When he tiptoed downstairs, Fuji had gone to bed. Gissing went into his study, lit a pipe, and

walked up and down, thinking. By and bye he wrote two letters. One was to a bookseller in the city, asking him to send (at once) one copy of Dr. Holt's book on the Care and Feeding of Children, and a well-illustrated edition of Mother Goose. The other was to Mr. Poodle, asking him to fix a date for the christening of Mr. Gissing's three small nephews, who had come to live with him.

"It is lucky they are all boys," said Gissing. "I would know nothing about bringing up girls."

"I suppose," he added after a while, "that I shall have to raise Fuji's wages."

Then he went into the kitchen and fixed the dishcloth rack.

Before going to bed that night he took his usual walk around the house. The sky was freckled with stars. It was generally his habit to make a tour of his property toward midnight, to be sure everything was in good order. He always looked into the ice-box, and admired the cleanliness of Fuji's arrangements. The milk bottles were properly capped with their round cardboard tops; the cheese was never put on the same rack with the butter; the doors of the ice-

box were carefully latched. Such observations, and the slow twinkle of the fire in the range, deep down under the curfew layer of coals, pleased him. In the cellar he peeped into the garbage can, for it was always a satisfaction to assure himself that Fuji did not waste anything that could be used. One of the laundry tub taps was dripping, with a soft measured tinkle: he said to himself that he really must have it attended to. All these domestic matters seemed more significant than ever when he thought of youthful innocence sleeping upstairs in the spare-room bed. His had been a selfish life hitherto, he feared. These puppies were just what he needed to take him out of himself.

Busy with these thoughts, he did not notice the ironical whistling coming from the pond. He tasted the night air with cheerful satisfaction. "At any rate, to-morrow will be a fine day," he said.

The next day it rained. But Gissing was too busy to think about the weather. Every hour or so during the night he had gone into the spare room to listen attentively to the breathing of the

puppies, to pull the blanket over them, and feel their noses. It seemed to him that they were perspiring a little, and he was worried lest they catch cold. His morning sleep (it had always been his comfortable habit to lie abed a trifle late) was interrupted about seven o'clock by a lively clamour across the hall. The puppies were awake, perfectly restored, and while they were too young to make their wants intelligible, they plainly expected some attention. He gave them a pair of old slippers to play with, and proceeded to his own toilet.

As he was bathing them, after breakfast, he tried to enlist Fuji's enthusiasm. "Did you ever see such fat rascals?" he said. "I wonder if we ought to trim their tails? How pink their stomachs are, and how pink and delightful between their toes! You hold these two while I dry the other. No, not that way! Hold them so you support their spines. A puppy's back is very delicate: you can't be too careful. We'll have to do things in a rough-and-ready way until Dr. Holt's book comes. After that we can be scientific."

Fuji did not seem very keen. Presently, in

spite of the rain, he was dispatched to the village department store to choose three small cribs and a multitude of safety pins. "Plenty of safety pins is the idea," said Gissing. "With enough safety pins handy, children are easy to manage."

As soon as the puppies were bestowed on the porch, in the sunshine, for their morning nap, he telephoned to the local paperhanger.

"I want you" (he said) "to come up as soon as you can with some nice samples of nursery wall-paper. A lively Mother Goose pattern would do very well." He had already decided to change the spare room into a nursery. He telephoned the carpenter to make a gate for the top of the stairs. He was so busy that he did not even have time to think of his pipe, or the morning paper. At last, just before lunch, he found a breathing space. He sat down in the study to rest his legs, and looked for the *Times*. It was not in its usual place on his reading table. At that moment the puppies woke up, and he ran out to attend them. He would have been distressed if he had known that Fuji had the paper in the kitchen, and was studying the HELP WANTED columns.

A great deal of interest was aroused in the

neighbourhood by the arrival of Gissing's nephews, as he called them. Several of the ladies, who had ignored him hitherto, called, in his absence, and left extra cards. This implied (he supposed, though he was not closely versed in such niceties of society) that there was a Mrs. Gissing, and he was annoyed, for he felt certain they knew he was a bachelor. But the children were a source of nothing but pride to him. They grew with astounding rapidity, ate their food without coaxing, rarely cried at night, and gave him much amusement by their naïve ways. He was too occupied to be troubled with introspection. Indeed, his well-ordered home was very different from before. The trim lawn, in spite of his zealous efforts, was constantly littered with toys. In sheer mischief the youngsters got into his wardrobe and chewed off the tails of his evening dress coat. But he felt a satisfying dignity and happiness in his new status as head of a family.

What worried him most was the fear that Fuji would complain of this sudden addition to his duties. The butler's face was rather an enigma, particularly at meal times, when Gissing sat at the dinner table surrounded by the three puppies

in their high chairs, with a spindrift of milk and prune-juice spattering generously as the youngsters plied their spoons. Fuji had arranged a series of scuppers, made of oilcloth, underneath the chairs; but in spite of this the dining-room rug, after a meal, looked much as the desert place must have after the feeding of the multitude. Fuji, who was pensive, recalled the five loaves and two fishes that produced twelve baskets of fragments. The vacuum cleaner got clogged by a surfeit of crumbs.

Gissing saw that it would be a race between heart and head. If Fuji's heart should become entangled (that is, if the innocent charms of the children should engage his affections) before his reason convinced him that the situation was now too arduous, there was some hope. He tried to ease the problem also by mental suggestion. "It is really remarkable" (he said to Fuji) "that children should give one so little trouble." As he made this remark, he was speeding hotly to and fro between the bathroom and the nursery, trying to get one tucked in bed and another undressed, while the third was lashing the tub into soapy foam.

Fuji made his habitual response, "Very good, sir." But one fears that he detected some insincerity, for the next day, which was Sunday, he gave notice. This generally happens on a Sunday, because the papers publish more Help Wanted advertisements then than on any other day.

"I'm sorry, sir," he said. "But when I took this place there was nothing said about three children."

This was unreasonable of Fuji. It is very rare to have everything explained beforehand. When Adam and Eve were put into the Garden of Eden, there was nothing said about the serpent.

However, Gissing did not believe in entreating a servant to stay. He offered to give Fuji a raise, but the butler was still determined to leave.

"My senses are very delicate," he said. "I really cannot stand the—well, the aroma exhaled by those three children when they have had a warm bath."

"What nonsense!" cried Gissing. "The smell of wet, healthy puppies? Nothing is more agreeable. You are cold-blooded: I don't believe you are fond of puppies. Think of their wobbly

black noses. Consider how pink is the little cleft between their toes and the main cushion of their feet. Their ears are like silk. Inside their upper jaws are parallel black ridges, most remarkable. I never realized before how beautifully and carefully we are made. I am surprised that you should be so indifferent to these things."

There was a moisture in Fuji's eyes, but he left at the end of the week.

CHAPTER THREE

A SOLITARY little path ran across the fields not far from the house. It lay deep among tall grasses and the withered brittle stalks of last autumn's goldenrod, and here Gissing rambled in the green hush of twilight, after the puppies were in bed. In less responsible days he would have lain down on his back, with all four legs upward, and cheerily shrugged and rolled to and fro, as the crisp ground-stubble was very pleasing to the spine. But now he paced soberly, the smoke from his pipe eddying just above the top of the grasses. He had much to meditate.

The dogwood tree by the house was now in flower. The blossoms, with their four curved petals, seemed to spin like tiny white propellers in the bright air. When he saw them fluttering Gissing had a happy sensation of movement. The business of those tremulous petals seemed to be

thrusting his whole world forward and forward, through the viewless ocean of space. He felt as though he were on a ship—as, indeed, we are. He had never been down to the open sea, but he had imagined it. There, he thought, there must be the satisfaction of a real horizon.

Horizons had been a great disappointment to him. In earlier days he had often slipped out of the house not long after sunrise, and had marvelled at the blue that lies upon the skyline. Here, about him, were the clear familiar colours of the world he knew; but yonder, on the hills, were trees and spaces of another more heavenly tint. That soft blue light, if he could reach it, must be the beginning of what his mind required.

He envied Mr. Poodle, whose cottage was on that very hillslope that rose so imperceptibly into sky. One morning he ran and ran, in the lifting day, but always the blue receded. Hot and unbuttoned, he came by the curate's house, just as the latter emerged to pick up the morning paper.

"Where does the blue begin?" Gissing panted, trying hard to keep his tongue from sliding out so wetly.

The curate looked a trifle disturbed. He feared

that something unpleasant had happened, and that his assistance might be required before breakfast.

"It is going to be a warm day," he said politely, and stooped for the newspaper, as a delicate hint.

"Where does——?" began Gissing, quivering; but at that moment, looking round, he saw that it had hoaxed him again. Far away, on his own hill the other side of the village, shone the evasive colour. As usual, he had been too impetuous. He had not watched it while he ran; it had circled round behind him. He resolved to be more methodical.

The curate gave him a blank to fill in, relative to baptizing the children, and was relieved to see him hasten away.

But all this was some time ago. As he walked the meadow path, Gissing suddenly realized that lately he had had little opportunity for pursuing blue horizons. Since Fuji's departure every moment, from dawn to dusk, was occupied. In three weeks he had had three different servants, but none of them would stay. The place was too

lonely, they said, and with three puppies the work was too hard. The washing, particularly, was a horrid problem. Inexperienced as a parent, Gissing was probably too proud: he wanted the children always to look clean and *soigné*. The last cook had advertised herself as a General Houseworker, afraid of nothing; but as soon as she saw the week's wash in the hamper (including twenty-one grimy rompers), she telephoned to the station for a taxi. Gissing wondered why it was that the working classes were not willing to do one-half as much as he, who had been reared to indolent ease. Even more, he was irritated by a suspicion of the ice-wagon driver. He could not prove it, but he had an idea that this uncouth fellow obtained a commission from the Airedales and Collies, who had large mansions in the neighbourhood, for luring maids from the smaller homes. Of course Mrs. Airedale and Mrs. Collie could afford to pay any wages at all. So now the best he could do was to have Mrs. Spaniel, the charwoman, come up from the village to do the washing and ironing, two days a week. The rest of the work he undertook himself. On a clear afternoon, when the neighbours were not looking,

he would take his own shirts and things down to the pond—putting them neatly in the bottom of the red express-wagon, with the puppies sitting on the linen, so no one would see. While the puppies played about and hunted for tadpoles, he would wash his shirts himself.

His legs ached as he took his evening stroll—keeping within earshot of the house, so as to hear any possible outcry from the nursery. He had been on his feet all day. But he reflected that there was a real satisfaction in his family tasks, however gruelling. Now, at last (he said to himself), I am really a citizen, not a mere dilettante. Of course it is arduous. No one who is not a parent realizes, for example, the extraordinary amount of buttoning and unbuttoning necessary in rearing children. I calculate that 50,000 buttonings are required for each one before it reaches the age of even rudimentary independence. With the energy so expended one might write a great novel or chisel a statue. Never mind: these urchins must be my Works of Art. If one were writing a novel, he could not delegate to a hired servant the composition of laborious chapters.

So he took his responsibility gravely. This

was partly due to the christening service, perhaps, which had gone off very charmingly. It had not been without its embarrassments. None of the neighbouring ladies would stand as godmother, for they were secretly dubious as to the children's origin; so he had asked good Mrs. Spaniel to act in that capacity. She, a simple kindly creature, was much flattered, though certainly she can have understood very little of the symbolical rite. Gissing, filling out the form that Mr. Poodle had given him, had put down the names of an entirely imaginary brother and sister-in-law of his, "deceased," whom he asserted as the parents. He had been so busy with preparations that he did not find time, before the ceremony, to study the text of the service; and when he and Mrs. Spaniel stood beneath the font with an armful of ribboned infancy, he was frankly startled by the magnitude of the promises exacted from him. He found that, on behalf of the children, he must "renounce the devil and all his work, the vain pomp and glory of the world;" that he must pledge himself to see that these infants would "crucify the old man and utterly abolish the whole body of sin." It was rather

doubtful whether they would do so, he reflected, as he felt them squirming in his arms while Mrs. Spaniel was busy trying to keep their socks on. When the curate exhorted him "to follow the innocency" of these little ones, it was disconcerting to have one of them burst into a piercing yammer, and wriggle so forcibly that it slipped quite out of its little embroidered shift and flannel band. But the actual access to the holy basin was more seemly, perhaps due to the children imagining they were going to find tadpoles there. When Mr. Poodle held them up they smiled with a vague almost bashful simplicity; and Mrs. Spaniel could not help murmuring "The darlings!" The curate, less experienced with children, had insisted on holding all three at once, and Gissing feared lest one of them might swarm over the surpliced shoulder and fall splash into the font. But though they panted a little with excitement, they did nothing to mar the solemn instant. While Mrs. Spaniel was picking up the small socks with which the floor was strewn, Gissing was deeply moved by the poetry of the ceremony. He felt that something had really been accomplished toward "burying the Old

Adam." And if Mrs. Spaniel ever grew disheartened at the wash-tubs, he was careful to remind her of the beautiful phrase about the mystical washing away of sin.

They had been christened Groups, Bunks, and Yelpers, three traditional names in his family.

Indeed, he was reflecting as he walked in the dusk, Mrs. Spaniel was now his sheet anchor. Fortunately she showed signs of becoming extraordinarily attached to the puppies. On the two days a week when she came up from the village, it was even possible for him to get a little relaxation—to run down to the station for tobacco, or to lie in the hammock briefly with a book. Looking off from his airy porch, he could see the same blue distances that had always tempted him, but he felt too passive to wonder about them. He had given up the idea of trying to get any other servants. If it had been possible, he would have engaged Mrs. Spaniel to sleep in the house and be there permanently; but she had children of her own down in the shantytown quarter of the village, and had to go back to them at night. But certainly he made every effort to keep her contented. It was a long steep climb up from the

hollow, so he allowed her to come in a taxi and charge it to his account. Then, on condition that she would come on Saturdays also, to help him clean up for Sunday, he allowed her, on that day, to bring her own children too, and all the puppies played riotously together around the place. But this he presently discontinued, for the clamour became so deafening that the neighbours complained. Besides, the young Spaniels, who were a little older, got Groups, Bunks, and Yelpers into noisy and careless habits of speech.

He was anxious that they should grow up refined, and was distressed by little Shaggy Spaniel having brought up the Comic Section of a Sunday paper. With childhood's instinctive taste for primitive effects, the puppies fell in love with the coloured cartoons, and badgered him continually for "funny papers."

There is a great deal more to think about in raising children (he said to himself) than is intimated in Dr. Holt's book on *Care and Feeding*. Even in matters that he had always taken for granted, such as fairy tales, he found perplexity. After supper—(he now joined the children in their evening bread and milk, for after cooking

them a hearty lunch of meat and gravy and potatoes and peas and the endless spinach and carrots that the doctors advise, to say nothing of the prunes, he had no energy to prepare a special dinner for himself)—after supper it was his habit to read to them, hoping to give their imaginations a little exercise before they went to bed. He was startled to find that Grimm and Hans Andersen, which he had considered as authentic classics for childhood, were full of very strong stuff—morbid sentiment, bloodshed, horror, and all manner of painful circumstance. Reading the tales aloud, he edited as he went along; but he was subject to that curious weakness that afflicts some people: reading aloud made him helplessly sleepy: after a page or so he would fall into a doze, from which he would be awakened by the crash of a lamp or some other furniture. The children, seized with that furious hilarity that usually begins just about bedtime, would race madly about the house until some breakage or a burst of tears woke him from his trance. He would thrash them all and put them to bed howling. When they were asleep he would be touched with tender compassion, and steal in to tuck them up, admiring the innocence

of each unconscious muzzle on its pillow. Sometimes, in a crisis of his problems, he thought of writing to Dr. Holt for advice; but the will-power was lacking.

It is really astonishing how children can exhaust one, he used to think. Sometimes, after a long day, he was even too weary to correct their grammar. "You lay down!" Groups would admonish Yelpers, who was capering in his crib while Bunks was being lashed in with the largest size of safety pins. And Gissing, doggedly passing from one to another, was really too fatigued to reprove the verb, picked up from Mrs. Spaniel.

Fairy tales proving a disappointment, he had great hopes of encouraging them in drawing. He bought innumerable coloured crayons and stacks of scribbling paper. After supper they would all sit down around the dining-room table and he drew pictures for them. Tongues depending with concentrated excitement, the children would try to copy these pictures and colour them. In spite of having three complete sets of crayons, a full roster of colours could rarely be found at drawing time. Bunks had the violet when Groups wanted it, and so on. But still, this was ofter

the happiest hour of the day. Gissing drew amazing trains, elephants, ships, and rainbows, with the spectrum of colours correctly arranged and blended. The children specially loved his landscapes, which were opulently tinted and magnificent in long perspectives. He found himself always colouring the far horizons a pale and haunting blue.

He was meditating these things when a shrill yammer recalled him to the house.

CHAPTER FOUR

IN THIS warm summer weather Gissing slept on a little outdoor balcony that opened off the nursery. The world, rolling in her majestic seaway, heeled her gunwale slowly into the trough of space. Disked upon this bulwark, the sun rose, and promptly Gissing woke. The poplars flittered in a cool stir. Beyond the tadpole pond, through a notch in the landscape, he could see the far darkness of the hills. That fringe of woods was a railing that kept the sky from flooding over the earth.

The level sun, warily peering over the edge like a cautious marksman, fired golden volleys unerringly at him. At once Gissing was aware and watchful. Brief truce was over: the hopeless war with Time began anew.

This was his placid hour. Light, so early, lies timidly along the ground. It steals gently from ridge to ridge; it is soft, unsure. That blue

dimness, receding from bole to bole, is the skirt of Night's garment, trailing off toward some other star. As easily as it slips from tree to tree, it glides from earth to Orion.

Light, which later will riot and revel and strike pitilessly down, still is tender and tentative. It sweeps in rosy scythe-strokes, parallel to earth. It gilds, where later it will burn.

Gissing lay, without stirring. The springs of the old couch were creaky, and the slightest sound might arouse the children within. Now, until they woke, was his peace. Purposely he had had the sleeping porch built on the eastern side of the house. Making the sun his alarm clock, he prolonged the slug-a-bed luxury. He had procured the darkest and most opaque of all shades for the nursery windows, to cage as long as possible in that room Night the silencer. At this time of the year, the song of the mosquito was his dreaded nightingale. In spite of fine-mesh screens, always one or two would get in. Mrs. Spaniel, he feared, left the kitchen door ajar during the day, and these Borgias of the insect world, patiently invasive, seized their chance. It was a rare night when a sudden scream did not

come from the nursery every hour or so. "Daddy, a keeto, a keeto!" was the anguish from one of the trio. The other two were up instantly, erect and yelping in their cribs, small black paws on the rail, pink stomachs candidly exposed to the winged stiletto. Lights on, and the room must be explored for the lurking foe. Scratching themselves vigorously, the fun of the chase assuaged the smart of those red welts. Gissing, wise by now, knew that after a foray the mosquito always retires to the ceiling, so he kept a stepladder in the room. Mounted on this, he would pursue the enemy with a towel, while the children screamed with merriment. Then stomachs must be anointed with more citronella; sheets and blankets reassembled, and quiet gradually restored. Life, as parents know, can be supported on very little sleep.

But how delicious to lie there, in the morning freshness, to hear the earth stir with reviving gusto, the merriment of birds, the exuberant clink of milk-bottles set down by the back-door, the whole complex machinery of life begin anew! Gissing was amazed now, looking back upon his previous existence, to see himself so busy, so

active. Few people are really lazy, he thought: what we call laziness is merely maladjustment. For in any department of life where one is genuinely interested, he will be zealous beyond belief. Certainly he had not dreamed, until he became (in a manner of speaking) a parent, that he had in him such capacity for detail.

This business of raising a family, though—had he any true aptitude for it? or was he forcing himself to go through with it? Wasn't he, moreover, incurring all the labours of parenthood without any of its proper dignity and social esteem? Mrs. Chow down the street, for instance, why did she look so sniffingly upon him when she heard the children, in the harmless uproar of their play, cry him aloud as *Daddy?* Uncle, he had intended they should call him; but that is, for beginning speech, a hard saying, embracing both a palatal and a liquid. Whereas *Da-da*—the syllables come almost unconsciously to the infant mouth. So he had encouraged it, and even felt an irrational pride in the honourable but unearned title.

A little word, *Daddy*, but one of the most potent, he was thinking. More than a word, per-

haps: a great social engine: an anchor which, cast carelessly overboard, sinks deep and fast into the very bottom. The vessel rides on her hawser, and where are your blue horizons then?

But come now, isn't one horizon as good as another? And do they really remain blue when you reach them?

Unconsciously he stirred, stretching his legs deeply into the comfortable nest of his couch. The springs twanged. Simultaneous clamours! The puppies were awake.

They yelled to be let out from the cribs. This was the time of the morning frolic. Gissing had learned that there is only one way to deal with the almost inexhaustible energy of childhood. That is, not to attempt to check it, but to encourage and draw it out. To start the day with a rush, stimulating every possible outlet of zeal; meanwhile taking things as calmly and quietly as possible himself, sitting often to take the weight off his legs, and allowing the youngsters to wear themselves down. This, after all, is Nature's own way with man; it is the wise parent's tactic with children. Thus, by dusk, the puppies will have run themselves almost into a stupor; and you, if

you have shrewdly husbanded your strength, may have still a little power in reserve for reading and smoking.

The before-breakfast game was conducted on regular routine. Children show their membership in the species by their love of strict habit.

Gissing let them yell for a few moments—as long as he thought the neighbours would endure it—while he gradually gathered strength and resolution, shook off the cowardice of bed. Then he strode into the nursery. As soon as they heard him raising the shades there was complete silence. They hastened to pull the blankets over themselves, and lay tense, faces on paws, with bright expectant upward eyes. They trembled a little with impatience. It was all he could do to restrain himself from patting the sleek heads, which always seemed to shine with extra polish after a night's rolling to and fro on the flattened pillows. But sternness was a part of the game at this moment. He solemnly unlatched and lowered the tall sides of the cribs.

He stood in the middle of the room, with a gesture of command. "Quiet now," he said. "Quiet, until I tell you!"

Yelpers could not help a small whine of intense emotion, which slipped out unintended. The eyes of Groups and Bunks swivelled angrily toward their unlucky brother. It was his failing: in crises he always emitted haphazard sounds. But this time Gissing, with lenient forgiveness, pretended not to have heard.

He returned to the balcony, and reëntered his couch, where he lay feigning sleep. In the nursery was a terrific stillness.

It was the rule of the game that they should lie thus, in absolute quiet, until he uttered a huge imitation snore. Once, after a particularly exhausting night, he had postponed the snore too long: he fell asleep. He did not wake for an hour, and then found the tragic three also sprawled in amazing slumber. But their pillows were wet with tears. He never succumbed again, no matter how deeply tempted.

He snored. There were three sprawling thumps, a rush of feet, and a tumbling squeeze through the screen door. Then they were on the couch and upon him, with panting yelps of glee. Their hot tongues rasped busily over his face. This was the great tickling game. Remembering his

theory of conserving energy, he lay passive while they rollicked and scrambled, burrowing in the bedclothes, quivering imps of absurd pleasure. All that was necessary was to give an occasional squirm, to tweak their ribs now and then, so that they believed his heart was in the sport. Really he got quite a little rest while they were scuffling. No one knew exactly what was the imagined purpose of the lark—whether he was supposed to be trying to escape from them, or they from him. Like all the best games, it had not been carefully thought out.

"Now, children," said Gissing presently. "Time to get dressed."

It was amazing how fast they were growing. Already they were beginning to take a pride in trying to dress themselves. While Gissing was in the bathroom, enjoying his cold tub (and under the stimulus of that icy sluice forming excellent resolutions for the day) the children were sitting on the nursery floor eagerly studying the intricacies of their gear. By the time he returned they would have half their garments on wrong; waist and trousers front side to rear; right shoes on left feet; buttons hopelessly mismated to but-

tonholes; shoelacings oddly zigzagged. It was far more trouble to permit their ambitious bungling, which must be undone and painstakingly reassembled, than to have clad them all himself, swiftly revolving and garmenting them like dolls. But in these early hours of the day, patience still is robust. It was his pedagogy to encourage their innocent initiatives, so long as endurance might permit.

Best of all, he enjoyed watching them clean their teeth. It was delicious to see them, tiptoe on their hind legs at the basin, to which their noses just reached; mouths gaping wide as they scrubbed with very small toothbrushes. They were so elated by squeezing out the toothpaste from the tube that he had not the heart to refuse them this privilege, though it was wasteful. For they always squeezed out more than necessary, and after a moment's brushing their mouths became choked and clotted with the pungent foam. Much of this they swallowed, for he had not been able to teach them to rinse and gargle. Their only idea regarding any fluid in the mouth was to swallow it; so they coughed and strangled and barked. Gissing had a theory that this tooth-

paste foam must be an appetizer, for he found that the more of it they swallowed, the better they ate their breakfast.

After breakfast he hurried them out into the garden, before the day became too hot. As he put a new lot of prunes to soak in cold water, he could not help reflecting how different the kitchen and pantry looked from the time of Fuji. The ice-box pan seemed to be continually brimming over. Somehow—due, he feared, to a laxity on Mrs. Spaniel's part—ants had got in. He was always finding them inside the ice-box, and wondered where they came from. He was amazed to find how negligent he was growing about pots and pans: he began cooking a new mess of oatmeal in the double boiler without bothering to scrape out the too adhesive remnant of the previous porridge. He had come to the conclusion that children are tougher and more enduring than Dr. Holt will admit; and that a little carelessness in matters of hygiene and sterilization does not necessarily mean instant death.

Truly his once dainty ménage was deteriorating. He had put away his fine china, put away the linen napery, and laid the table with oil-

cloth. He had even improved upon Fuji's invention of scuppers by a little trough which ran all round the rim of the table, to catch any possible spillage. He was horrified to observe how inevitably callers came at the worst possible moment. Mr. and Mrs. Chow, for instance, drew up one afternoon in their spick-and-span coupé, with their intolerably spotless only child sitting self-consciously beside them. Groups, Bunks, and Yelpers were just then filling the garden with horrid clamour. They had been quarrelling, and one had pushed the other two down the back steps. Gissing, who had attempted to find a quiet moment to scald the ants out of the ice-box, had just rushed forth and boxed them all. As he stood there, angry and waving a steaming dishclout, the Chows appeared. The puppies at once set upon little Sandy Chow, and had thoroughly mauled his starched sailor suit in the driveway before two minutes were past. Gissing could not help laughing, for he suspected that there had been a touch of malice in the Chows coming just at that time.

He had given up his flower garden, too. It was all he could do to shove the lawn-mower

around, in the dusk, after the puppies were in bed. Formerly he had found the purr of the twirling blades a soothing stimulus to thought; but nowadays he could not even think consecutively. Perhaps, he thought, the residence of the mind is in the legs, not in the head; for when your legs are thoroughly weary you can't seem to think.

So he had decided that he simply must have more help in the cooking and housework. He had instructed Mrs. Spaniel to send the washing to the steam-laundry, and spend her three days in the kitchen instead. A huge bundle had come back from the laundry, and he had paid the driver $15.98. With dismay he sorted the clean, neatly folded garments. Here was the worthy Mrs. Spaniel's list, painstakingly written out in her straggling script:—

MR. GISHING FAMILY WOSH

8 towls
6 pymjarm Mr Gishing
12 rompers
3 blowses

6 cribb sheats
1 Mr. Gishing sheat
4 wastes
3 wosh clothes
2 onion sutes Mr Gishing
6 smal onion sutes
4 pillo slipes
3 sherts
18 hankerchifs smal
6 hankerchifs large
8 colers
3 overhauls
10 bibbs
2 table clothes (coco stane)
1 table clothe (prun juce and eg)

After contemplating this list, Gissing went to his desk and began to study his accounts. A resolve was forming in his mind.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE summer evenings sounded a very different music from that thin wheedling of April. It was now a soft steady vibration, the incessant drone and throb of locust and cricket, and sometimes the sudden rasp, dry and hard, of katydids. Gissing, in spite of his weariness, was all fidgets. He would walk round and round the house in the dark, unable to settle down to anything; tired, but incapable of rest. What is this uneasiness in the mind, he asked himself? The great sonorous drumming of the summer night was like the bruit of Time passing steadily by. Even in the soft eddy of the leaves, lifted on a drowsy creeping air, was a sound of discontent, of troublesome questioning. Through the trees he could see the lighted oblongs of neighbours' windows, or hear stridulent jazz records. Why were all others so cheerfully absorbed in the minutiæ of their lives, and he so

painfully ill at ease? Sometimes, under the warm clear darkness, the noises of field and earth swelled to a kind of soft thunder: his quickened ears heard a thousand small outcries contributing to the awful energy of the world—faint chimings and whistlings in the grass, and endless flutter, rustle, and whirr. His own body, on which hair and nails grew daily like vegetation, startled and appalled him. Consciousness of self, that miserable ecstasy, was heavy upon him.

He envied the children, who lay upstairs sprawled under their mosquito nettings. Immersed in living, how happily unaware of being alive! He saw, with tenderness, how naïvely they looked to him as the answer and solution of their mimic problems. But where could he find someone to be to him what he was to them? The truth apparently was that in his inward mind he was desperately lonely. Reading the poets by fits and starts, he suddenly realized that in their divine pages moved something of this loneliness, this exquisite unhappiness. But these great hearts had had the consolation of setting down their moods in beautiful words, words that lived

and spoke. His own strange fever burned inexpressibly inside him. Was he the only one who felt the challenge offered by the maddening fertility and foison of the hot sun-dazzled earth? Life, he realized, was too amazing to be frittered out in this aimless sickness of heart. There were truths and wonders to be grasped, if he could only throw off this wistful vague desire. He felt like a clumsy strummer seated at a dark shining grand piano, which he knows is capable of every glory of rolling music, yet he can only elicit a few haphazard chords.

He had his moments of arrogance, too. Ah, he was very young! This miracle of blue unblemished sky that had baffled all others since life began—he, he would unriddle it! He was inclined to sneer at his friends who took these things for granted, and did not perceive the infamous insolubility of the whole scheme. Remembering the promises made at the christening, he took the children to church; but alas, carefully analyzing his mind, he admitted that his attention had been chiefly occupied with keeping them orderly, and he had gone through the service almost automatically. Only in singing hymns

did he experience a tingle of exalted feeling. But Mr. Poodle was proud of his well-trained choir, and Gissing had a feeling that the congregation was not supposed to do more than murmur the verses, for fear of spoiling the effect. In his favourite hymns he had a tendency to forget himself and let go: his vigorous tenor rang lustily. Then he realized that the backs of people's heads looked surprised. The children could not be kept quiet unless they stood up on the pews. Mr. Poodle preached rather a long sermon, and Yelpers, toward twelve-thirty, remarked in a clear tone of interested inquiry, "What time does God have dinner?"

Gissing had a painful feeling that he and Mr. Poodle did not thoroughly understand each other. The curate, who was kindness itself, called one evening, and they had a friendly chat. Gissing was pleased to find that Mr. Poodle enjoyed a cigar, and after some hesitation ventured to suggest that he still had something in the cellar. Mr. Poodle said that he didn't care for anything, but his host could not help hearing the curate's tail quite unconsciously thumping on the chair cushions. So he excused himself and brought up

one of his few remaining bottles of White Horse. Mr. Poodle crossed his legs and they chatted about golf, politics, the income tax, and some of the recent books; but when Gissing turned the talk on religion, Mr. Poodle became diffident. Gissing, warmed and cheered by the vital Scotch, was perhaps too direct.

"What ought I to do to 'crucify the old man'?" he said.

Mr. Poodle was rather embarrassed.

"You must mortify the desires of the flesh," he replied. "You must dig up the old bone of sin that is buried in all our hearts."

There were many more questions Gissing wanted to ask about this, but Mr. Poodle said he really must be going, as he had a call to pay on Mr. and Mrs. Chow.

Gissing walked down the path with him, and the curate did indeed set off toward the Chows'. But Gissing wondered, for a little later he heard a cheerful canticle upraised in the open fields.

He himself was far from gay. He longed to tear out this malady from his breast. Poor dreamer, he did not know that to do so is to tear out God Himself.

"Mrs. Spaniel," he said when the laundress next came up from the village, "you are a widow, aren't you?"

"Yes, sir," she said. "Poor Spaniel was killed by a truck, two years ago April." Her face was puzzled, but beneath her apron Gissing could see her tail wagging.

"Don't misunderstand me," he said quickly. "I've got to go away on business. I want you to bring your children and move into this house while I'm gone. I'll make arrangements at the bank about paying all the bills. You can give up your outside washing and devote yourself entirely to looking after this place."

Mrs. Spaniel was so much surprised that she could not speak. In her amazement a bright bubble dripped from the end of her curly tongue. Hastily she caught it in her apron, and apologized.

"How long will you be away, sir?" she asked.

"I don't know. It may be quite a long time."

"But all your beautiful things, furniture and everything," said Mrs. Spaniel. "I'm afraid my children are a bit rough. They're not used to living in a house like this——"

"Well," said Gissing, "you must do the best you can. There are some things more important than furniture. It will be good for your children to get accustomed to refined surroundings, and it'll be good for my nephews to have someone to play with. Besides, I don't want them to grow up spoiled mollycoddles. I think I've been fussing over them too much. If they have good stuff in them, a little roughening won't do any permanent harm."

"Dear me," cried Mrs. Spaniel, "what will the neighbours think?"

"They won't," said Gissing. "I don't doubt they'll talk, but they won't think. Thinking is very rare. I've got to do some myself, that's one reason why I'm going. You know, Mrs. Spaniel, God is a horizon, not someone sitting on a throne."

Mrs. Spaniel didn't understand this—in fact, she didn't seem to hear it. Her mind was full of the idea that she would simply have to have a new dress, preferably black silk, for Sundays. Gissing, very sagacious, had already foreseen this point.

"Let's not have any argument," he continued. "I have planned everything. Here is some money

for immediate needs. I'll speak to them at the bank, and they will give you a weekly allowance. I leave you here as caretaker. Later on I'll send you an address and you can write me how things are going."

Poor Mrs. Spaniel was bewildered. She came of very decent people, but since Spaniel took to drink, and then left her with a family to support, she had sunk in the world. She was wondering now how she could face it out with Mrs. Chow and Mrs. Fox-Terrier and the other neighbours.

"Oh, dear," she cried, "I don't know what to say, sir. Why, my boys are so disreputable-looking, they haven't even a collar between them."

"Get them collars and anything else they need," said Gissing kindly. "Don't worry, Mrs. Spaniel, it will be a fine thing for you. There will be a little gossip, I dare say, but we'll have to chance that. Now you had better go down to the village and make your arrangements. I'm leaving to-night."

Late that evening, after seeing Mrs. Spaniel and her brood safely installed, Gissing walked to the station with his suitcase. He felt a pang as he lifted the mosquito nettings and kissed the

cool moist noses of the sleeping trio. But he comforted himself by thinking that this was no merely vulgar desertion. If he was to raise the family, he must earn some money. His modest income would not suffice for this sudden increase in expenses. Besides, he had never known what freedom meant until it was curtailed. For the past three months he had lived in ceaseless attendance; had even slept with one ear open for the children's cries. Now he owed it to himself to make one great strike for peace. Wealth, he could see, was the answer. With money, everything was attainable: books, leisure for study, travel, prestige—in short, command over the physical details of life. He would go in for Big Business. Already he thrilled with a sense of power and prosperity.

The little house stood silent in the darkness as he went down the path. The night was netted with the weaving sparkle of fireflies. He stood for a moment, looking. Suddenly there came a frightened cry from the nursery.

"Daddy, a keeto, a keeto!"

He nearly turned to run back, but checked himself. No, Mrs. Spaniel was now in charge.

It was up to her. Besides, he had only just enough time to catch the last train to the city.

But he sat on the cinder-speckled plush of the smoker in a mood that was hardly revelry. "By Jove," he said to himself, "I got away just in time. Another month and I couldn't have done it."

It was midnight when he saw the lights of town, panelled in gold against a peacock sky. Acres and acres of blue darkness lay close-pressing upon the gaudy grids of light. Here one might really look at this great miracle of shadow and see its texture. The dulcet air drifted lazily in deep, silent crosstown streets. "Ah," he said, "here is where the blue begins."

CHAPTER SIX

"For students of the troubled heart
Cities are perfect works of art."

THERE is a city so tall that even the sky above her seems to have lifted in a cautious remove, inconceivably far. There is a city so proud, so mad, so beautiful and young, that even heaven has retreated, lest her placid purity be too nearly tempted by that brave tragic spell. In the city which is maddest of all, Gissing had come to search for sanity. In the city so strangely beautiful that she has made even poets silent, he had come to find a voice. In the city of glorious ostent and vanity, he had come to look for humility and peace.

All cities are mad: but the madness is gallant. All cities are beautiful: but the beauty is grim. Who shall tell me the truth about this one? Tragic? Even so, because wherever ambitions, vanities, and follies are multiplied by millionfold

contact, calamity is there. Noble and beautiful? Aye, for even folly may have the majesty of magnitude. Hasty, cruel, shallow? Agreed, but where in this terrene orb will you find it otherwise? I know all that can be said against her; and yet in her great library of streets, vast and various as Shakespeare, is beauty enough for a lifetime. O poets, why have you been so faint? Because she seems cynical and crass, she cries with trumpet-call to the mind of the dreamer; because she is riant and mad, she speaks to the grave sanity of the poet.

So, in a mood perhaps too consciously lofty, Gissing was meditating. It was rather impudent of him to accuse the city of being mad, for he himself, in his glee over freedom regained, was not conspicuously sane. He scoured the town in high spirits, peering into shop-windows, riding on top of busses, going to the Zoo, taking the rickety old steamer to the Statue of Liberty, drinking afternoon tea at the Ritz, and all that sort of thing. The first three nights in town he slept in one of the little traffic-towers that perch on stilts up above Fifth Avenue. As a matter of fact, it was that one near St. Patrick's Cathedral. He

had ridden up the Avenue in a taxi, intending to go to the Plaza (just for a bit of splurge after his domestic confinement). As the cab went by, he saw the traffic-tower, dark and empty, and thought what a pleasant place to sleep. So he asked the driver to let him out at the Cathedral, and after being sure that he was not observed, walked back to the little turret, climbed up the ladder, and made himself at home. He liked it so well that he returned there the two following nights; but he didn't sleep much, for he could not resist the fun of startling night-hawk taxis by suddenly flashing the red, green, and yellow lights at them, and seeing them stop in bewilderment. But after three nights he thought it best to leave. It would have been awkward if the police had discovered him.

It was time to settle down and begin work. He had an uncle who was head of an important business far down-town; but Gissing, with the quixotry of youth, was determined to make his own start in the great world of commerce. He found a room on the top floor of a quiet brownstone house in the West Seventies. It was not large, and he had to go down a flight for his

bath; the gas burner over the bed whistled; the dust was rather startling after the clean country; but it was cheap, and his sense of adventure more than compensated. Mrs. Purp, the landlady, pleased him greatly. She was very maternal, and urged him not to bolt his meals in armchair lunches. She put an ashtray in his room.

Gissing sent Mrs. Spaniel a postcard with a picture of the Pennsylvania Station. On it he wrote *Arrived safely. Hard at work. Love to the children.* Then he went to look for a job.

His ideas about business were very vague. All he knew was that he wished to be very wealthy and influential as soon as possible. He could have had much sound advice from his uncle, who was a member of the Union Kennel and quite a prominent dog-about-town. But Gissing had the secretive pride of inexperience. Moreover, he did not quite know what to say about his establishment in the country. That houseful of children would need some explaining.

Those were days of brilliant heat; clear, golden, dry. The society columns in the papers assured him that everyone was out of town; but the

Avenue seemed plentifully crowded with beautiful, superb creatures. Far down the gentle slopes of that glimmering roadway he could see the rolling stream of limousines, dazzles of sunlight caught on their polished flanks. A faint blue haze of gasoline fumes hung low in the bright warm air. This is the street where even the most passive are pricked by the strange lure of carnal dominion. Nothing less than a job on the Avenue itself would suit his mood, he felt.

Fortune and audacity united (as they always do) to concede his desire. He was in the beautiful department store of Beagle and Company, one of the most splendid of its kind, looking at some sand-coloured spats. In an aisle near by he heard a commotion—nothing vulgar, but still an evident stir, with repressed yelps and a genteel, horrified bustle. He hastened to the spot, and through the crowd saw someone lying on the floor. An extremely beautiful salesdamsel, charmingly clad in black crêpe de chien, was supporting the victim's head, vainly fanning him. Wealthy dowagers were whining in distress. Then an ambulance clanged up to a side door, and a stretcher was brought in.

"What is it?" said Gissing to a female at the silk-stocking counter.

"One of the floorwalkers—died of heat prostration," she said, looking very much upset.

"Poor fellow," said Gissing. "You never know what will happen next, do you?" He walked away, shaking his head.

He asked the elevator attendant to direct him to the offices of the firm. On the seventh floor, down a quiet corridor behind the bedroom suites, a rosewood fence barred his way. A secretary faced him inquiringly.

"I wish to see Mr. Beagle."

"Mr. Beagle senior or Mr. Beagle junior?"

Youth cleaves to youth, said Gissing to himself. "Mr. Beagle junior," he stated firmly.

"Have you an appointment?"

"Yes," he said.

She took his card, disappeared, and returned. "This way, please," she said.

Mr. Beagle senior must be very old indeed, he thought; for junior was distinctly grizzled. In fact (so rapidly does the mind run), Mr. Beagle senior must be near the age of retirement. Very likely (he said to himself) that will soon occur;

there will be a general stepping-up among members of the firm, and that will be my chance. I wonder how much they pay a junior partner?

He almost uttered this question, as Mr. Beagle junior looked at him so inquiringly. But he caught himself in time.

"I beg your pardon for intruding," said Gissing, "but I am the new floorwalker."

"You are very kind," said Mr. Beagle junior, " but we do not need a new floorwalker."

"I beg your pardon again," said Gissing, "but you are not *au courant* with the affairs of the store. One has just died, right by the silk-stocking counter. Very bad for business."

At this moment the telephone rang, and Mr. Beagle seized it. He listened, sharply examining his caller meanwhile.

"You are right," he said, as he put down the receiver. "Well, sir, have you had any experience?"

"Not exactly of that sort," said Gissing; "but I think I understand the requirements. The tone of the store——"

"I will ask you to be here at four-thirty this

afternoon," said Mr. Beagle. "We have a particular routine in regard to candidates for that position. You will readily perceive that it is a post of some importance. The floorwalker is our point of social contact with patrons——"

Gissing negligently dusted his shoes with a handkerchief.

"Pray do not apologize," he said kindly. "I am willing to congratulate with you on your good fortune. It was mere hazard that I was in the store. To-day, of course, business will be poor. But to-morrow, I think you will find——"

"At four-thirty," said Mr. Beagle, a little puzzled.

That day Gissing went without lunch. First he explored the whole building from top to bottom, until he knew the location of every department, and had the store directory firmly memorized. With almost proprietory tenderness he studied the shining goods and trinkets; noted approvingly the clerks who seemed to him specially prompt and obliging to customers; scowled a little at any sign of boredom or inattention. He heard the soft sigh of the pneumatic tubes as they received money and blew it to some distant coffer:

this money, he thought, was already partly his. That square-cut creature whom he presently discerned following him was undoubtedly the store detective: he smiled to think what a pleasant anecdote this would be when he was admitted to junior partnership. Then he went, finally, to the special Masculine Shop on the fifth floor, where he bought a silk hat, a cutaway coat and waistcoat, and trousers of pearly stripe. He did not forget patent leather shoes, nor white spats. He refused the little white linen margins which the clerk wished to affix to the V of his waistcoat. That, he felt, was the ultra touch which would spoil all. The just less than perfection, how perfect it is!

It was getting late. He hurried to Penn Station where he hired one of those little dressing booths, and put on his regalia. His tweeds, in a neat package, he checked at the parcel counter. Then he returned to the store for the important interview.

He had expected a formal talk with the two Messrs. Beagle, perhaps touching on such matters as duties, hours, salary, and so on. To his surprise he was ushered by the secretary into a

charming Louis XVI salon farther down the private corridor. There were several ladies: one was pouring tea. Mr. Beagle junior came forward. The vice-president (such was Mr. Beagle junior's rank, Gissing had learned by the sign on his door) still wore his business garb of the morning. Gissing immediately felt himself to have the advantage. But what a pleasant idea, he thought, for the members of the firm to have tea together every afternoon. He handed his hat, gloves, and stick to the secretary.

"Very kind of you to come," said Mr. Beagle. "Let me present you to my wife."

Mrs. Beagle, at the tea-urn, received him graciously.

"Cream or lemon?" she said. "Two lumps?"

This is really delightful, Gissing thought. Only on Fifth Avenue could this kind of thing happen. He looked down upon the hostess from his superior height, and smiled charmingly.

"Do you permit three?" he said. "A little weakness of mine." As a matter of fact, he hated tea so sweet; but he felt it was strategic to fix himself in Mrs. Beagle's mind as a polished eccentric.

"You must have a meringue," she said. "Ah, Mrs. Pomeranian has them. Mrs. Pomeranian, let me present Mr. Gissing."

Mrs. Pomeranian, small and plump and tightly corseted, offered the meringues, while Mrs. Beagle pressed upon him a plate with a small doily, embroidered with the arms of the store, and its motto *je maintiendrai*—referring, no doubt, to its prices. Mr. Beagle then introduced him to several more ladies in rapid succession. Gissing passed along the line, bowing slightly but with courteous interest to each. To each one he raised his eyebrows and permitted himself a small significant smile, as though to convey that this was a moment he had long been anticipating. How different, he thought, was this life of enigmatic gaiety from the suburban drudgery of recent months. If only Mrs. Spaniel could see him now! He was about to utilize a brief pause by sipping his tea, when a white-headed patriarch suddenly appeared beside him.

"Mr. Gissing," said the vice-president, "this is my father, Mr. Beagle senior."

Gissing, by quick work, shuffled the teacup into his left paw, and the meringue plate into the

crook of his elbow, so he was ready for the old gentleman's salutation. Mr. Beagle senior was indeed very old: his white hair hung over his eyes, he spoke with growling severity. Gissing's manner to the old merchant was one of respectful reassurance: he attempted to make an impression that would console: to impart—of course without saying so—the thought that though the head of the firm could not last much longer, yet he would leave his great traffic in capable care.

"Where will I find an aluminum cooking pot?" growled the elder Beagle unexpectedly.

"In the Bargain Basement," said Gissing promptly.

"He'll do!" cried the president.

To his surprise, on looking round, Gissing saw that all the ladies had vanished. Beagle junior was grinning at him.

"You have the job, Mr. Gissing," he said. "You will pardon the harmless masquerade—we always try out a floorwalker in that way. My father thinks that if he can handle a teacup and a meringue while being introduced to ladies, he can manage anything on the main aisle downstairs. Mrs. Pomeranian, our millinery buyer, said she

had never seen it better done, and she mixes with some of the swellest people in Paris."

"Nine to six, with half an hour off for lunch," said the senior partner, and left the room.

Gissing calmly swallowed his tea, and ate the meringue. He would have enjoyed another, but the capable secretary had already removed them. He poured himself a second cup of tea. Mr. Beagle junior showed signs of eagerness to leave, but Gissing detained him.

"One moment," he said suavely. "There is a little matter that we have not discussed. The question of salary."

Mr. Beagle looked thoughtfully out of the window.

"Thirty dollars a week," he said.

After all, Gissing thought, it will only take four weeks to pay for what I have spent on clothes.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THERE was some dramatic nerve in Gissing's nature that responded eloquently to the floorwalking job. Never, in the history of Beagle and Company, had there been a floorwalker who threw so much passion and zeal into his task. The very hang of his coattails, even the erect carriage of his back, the rubbery way in which his feet trod the aisles, showed his sense of dignity and glamour. There seemed to be a great tradition which enriched and upheld him. Mr. Beagle senior used to stand on the little balcony at the rear of the main floor, transfixed with the pleasure of seeing Gissing move among the crowded passages. Alert, watchful, urbane, with just the ideal blend of courtesy and condescension, he raised floorwalking to a social art. Female customers asked him the way to departments they knew perfectly well, for the pleasure of hearing him direct them. Business

began to improve before he had been there a week.

And how he enjoyed himself! The perfection of his bearing on the floor was no careful pose: it was due to the brimming overplus of his happiness. Happiness is surely the best teacher of good manners: only the unhappy are churlish in deportment. He was young, remember; and this was his first job. His precocious experience as a paterfamilias had added to his mien just that suggestion of unconscious gravity which is so appealing to ladies. He looked (they thought) as though he had been touched—but Oh so lightly!—by poetic sorrow or strange experience: to ask him the way to the notion counter was as much of an adventure as to meet a reigning actor at a tea. The faint cloud of melancholy that shadowed his brow may have been only due to the fact that his new boots were pinching painfully; but they did not know that.

So, quite unconsciously, he began to "establish" himself in his rôle, just as an actor does. At first he felt his way tentatively and with tact. Every store has its own tone and atmosphere: in a day or so he divined the characteristic *cachet*

of the Beagle establishment. He saw what kind of customers were typical, and what sort of conduct they expected. And the secret of conquest being always to give people a little more than they expect, he pursued that course. Since they expected in a floorwalker the mechanical and servile gentility of a hired puppet, he exhibited the easy, offhand simplicity of a fellow club-member. With perfect naturalness he went out of his way to assist in their shopping concerns: gave advice in the selection of dress materials, acted as arbiter in the matching of frocks and stockings. His taste being faultless, it often happened that the things he recommended were not the most expensive: this again endeared him to customers. When sales slips were brought to him by ladies who wished to make an exchange, he affixed his O. K. with a magnificent flourish, and with such evident pleasure, that patrons felt genuine elation, and plunged into the tumult with new enthusiasm. It was not long before there were always people waiting for his counsel; and husbands would appear at the store to convey (a little irritably) some such message as: "Mrs. Sealyham says, please choose her a scarf that will go nicely with

that brown moiré dress of hers. She says you will remember the dress."—This popularity became even a bit perplexing, as for instance when old Mrs. Dachshund, the store's biggest Charge Account, insisted on his leaving his beat at a very busy time, to go up to the tenth floor to tell her which piano he thought had the richer tone.

Of course all this was very entertaining, and an admirable opportunity for studying his fellow-creatures; but it did not go very deep into his mind. He lived for some time in a confused glamour and glitter; surrounded by the fascinating specious life of the store, but drifting merely superficially upon it. The great place, with its columns of artificial marble and white censers of upward-shining electricity, glimmered like a birch forest by moonlight. Silver and jewels and silks and slippers flashed all about him. It was a marvellous education, for he soon learned to estimate these things at their proper value; which is low, for they have little to do with life itself. His work was tiring in the extreme—merely having to remain upright on his hind legs for such long hours was an ordeal—but it did not pene-

trate to the secret observant self of which he was always aware. This was advantageous. If you have no intellect, or only just enough to get along with, it does not much matter what you do. But if you really have a mind—by which is meant that rare and curious power of reason, of imagination, and of emotion; very different from a mere fertility of conversation and intelligent curiosity—it is better not to weary and wear it out over trifles.

So, when he left the store in the evening, no matter how his legs ached, his head was clear and untarnished. He did not hurry away at closing time. Places where people work are particularly fascinating after the bustle is over. He loved to linger in the long aisles, to see the tumbled counters being swiftly brought to order, to hear the pungent cynicisms of the weary shopgirls. To these, by the way, he was a bit of a mystery. The punctilio of his manner, the extreme courtliness of his remarks, embarrassed them a little. Behind his back they spoke of him as "The Duke" and admired him hugely; little Miss Whippet, at the stocking counter, said that he was an English noble of long pedigree, who had been unjustly deprived of his estates.

Down in the basement of this palatial store was a little dressing room and lavatory for the floorwalkers, where they doffed their formal raiment and resumed street attire. His colleagues grumbled and hastened to depart, but Gissing made himself entirely comfortable. In his locker he kept a baby's bathtub, which he leisurely filled with hot water at one of the basins. Then he sat serenely and bathed his feet; although it was against the rules he often managed to smoke a pipe while doing so. Then he hung up his store clothes neatly, and went off refreshed into the summer evening.

A warm rosy light floods the city at that hour. At the foot of every crosstown street is a bonfire of sunset. What a mood of secret smiling beset him as he viewed the great territory of his enjoyment. "The freedom of the city"—a phrase he had somewhere heard—echoed in his mind. The freedom of the city! A magnificent saying. Electric signs, first burning wanly in the pink air, then brightened and grew strong. "Not light, but rather darkness visible," in that magic hour that just holds the balance between paling day and the spendthrift jewellery of evening. Or,

if it rained, to sit blithely on the roof of a bus, revelling in the gust and whipping of the shower. Why had no one told him of the glory of the city? She was pride, she was exultation, she was madness. She was what he had obscurely craved. In every line of her gallant profile he saw conquest, triumph, victory! Empty conquest, futile triumph, doomed victory—but that was the essence of the drama. In thunderclaps of dumb ecstasy he saw her whole gigantic fabric, leaning and clamouring upward with terrible yearning. Burnt with pitiless sunlight, drenched with purple explosions of summer storm, he saw her cleansed and pure. Where were her recreant poets that they had never made these things plain?

And then, after the senseless day, after its happy but meaningless triviality, the throng and mixed perfumery and silly courteous gestures, his blessèd solitude! Oh solitude, that noble peace of the mind! He loved the throng and multitude of the day: he loved people: but sometimes he suspected that he loved them as God does—at a judicious distance. From his rather haphazard religious training, strange words came back to him. "For God so loved the world . . ." So

loved the world that—that what? That He sent someone else . . . Some day he must think this out. But you can't think things out. They think themselves, suddenly, amazingly. The city itself is God, he cried. Was not God's ultimate promise something about a city—The City of God? Well, but that was only symbolic language. The city—of course that was only a symbol for the race—for all his kind. The entire species, the whole aspiration and passion and struggle, that was God.

On the ferries, at night, after supper, was his favourite place for meditation. Some undeniable instinct drew him ever and again out of the deep and shut ravines of stone, to places where he could feed on distance. That is one of the subtleties of this straight and narrow city, that though her ways are cliffed in, they are a long thoroughfare for the eye: there is always a far perspective. But best of all to go down to her environing water, where spaces are wide: the openness that keeps her sound and free. Ships had words for him: they had crossed many horizons: fragments of that broken blue still shone on their cutting bows. Ferries, the most poetical things in the

city, were nearly empty at night: he stood by the rail, saw the black outline of the town slide by, saw the lower sky gilded with her merriment, and was busy thinking.

Now about a God (he said to himself)—instinct tells me that there is one, for when I think about Him I find that I unconsciously wag my tail a little. But I must not reason on that basis, which is too puppyish. I like to think that there is, somewhere in this universe, an inscrutable Being of infinite wisdom, harmony, and charity, by Whom all my desires and needs would be understood; in association with Whom I would find peace, satisfaction, a lightness of heart that exceed my present understanding. Such a Being is to me quite inconceivable; yet I feel that if I met Him, I would instantly understand. I do not mean that I would understand Him: but I would understand my relationship to Him, which would be perfect. Nor do I mean that it would be always happy; merely that it would transcend anything in the way of social significance that I now experience. But I must not conclude that there is such a God, merely because it would be so pleasant if there were.

Then (he continued) is it necessary to conceive that this deity is super-canine in essence? What I am getting at is this: in everyone I have ever known—Fuji, Mr. Poodle, Mrs. Spaniel, those maddening delightful puppies, Mrs. Purp, Mr. Beagle, even Mrs. Chow and Mrs. Sealyham and little Miss Whippet—I have always been aware that there was some mysterious point of union at which our minds could converge and entirely understand one another. No matter what our difference of breed, of training, of experience and education, provided we could meet and exchange ideas honestly there would be some satisfying point of mental fusion where we would feel our solidarity in the common mystery of life. People complain that wars are caused by and fought over trivial things. Why, of course! For it is only in trivial matters that people differ: in the deep realities they must necessarily be at one. Now I have a suspicion that in this secret sense of unity God may lurk. Is that what we mean by God, the sum total of all these instinctive understandings? But what is the origin of this sense of kinship? Is it not the realization of our common subjection to laws and forces greater than ourselves? Then,

since nothing can be greater than God, He must *be* these superior mysteries. Yet He cannot be greater than our minds, for our minds have imagined Him.

My mathematics is very rusty, he said to himself, but I seem to remember something about a *locus*, which was a curve or a surface every point on which satisfied some particular equation of relation among the coördinates. It begins to look to me as though life might be a kind of locus, whose commanding equation we call God. The points on that locus cannot conceive of the equation, yet they are subject to it. They cannot conceive of that equation, because of course it has no existence save as a law of their being. It exists only for them; they, only by it. But there it is—a perfect, potent, divine abstraction.

This carried him into a realm of disembodied thinking which his mind was not sufficiently disciplined to summarize. It is quite plain, he said to himself, that I must rub up my vanished mathematics. For certainly the mathematician comes closer to God than any other, since his mind is trained to conceive and formulate the magnificent phantoms of legality. He smiled to think that

any one should presume to become a parson without having at least mastered analytical geometry.

The ferry had crossed and recrossed the river several times, but Gissing had found no conclusion for these thoughts. As the boat drew toward her slip, she passed astern of a great liner. Gissing saw the four tall funnels loom up above the shed of the pier where she lay berthed. What was it that made his heart so stir? The perfect rake of the funnels—just that satisfying angle of slant—that, absurdly enough, was the nobility of the sight. Why, then? Let's get at the heart of this, he said. Just that little trick of the architect, useless in itself—what was it but the touch of swagger, of bravado, of defiance—going out into the vast, meaningless, unpitying sea with that dainty arrogance of build; taking the trouble to mock the senseless elements, hurricane, ice, and fog, with a 15-degree slope of masts and funnels . . . damn, what was the analogy?

It was pride, it was pride! It was the same lusty impudence that he saw in his perfect city, the city that cried out to the hearts of youth, jutted her mocking pinnacles toward sky, her

clumsy turrets verticalled on gold! And God, the God of gales and gravity, loved His children to dare and contradict Him, to rally Him with equations of their own.

"God, I defy you!" he cried.

CHAPTER EIGHT

TIME is a flowing river. Happy those who allow themselves to be carried, unresisting, with the current. They float through easy days. They live, unquestioning, in the moment.

But Gissing was acutely conscious of Time. Though not subtle enough to analyze the matter acutely, he had a troublesome feeling about it. He kept checking off a series of Nows. "Now I am having my bath," he would say to himself in the morning. "Now I am dressing. Now I am on the way to the store. Now I am in the jewellery aisle, being polite to customers. Now I am having lunch." After a period in which time ran by unnoticed, he would suddenly realize a fresh *Now*, and feel uneasy at the knowledge that it would shortly dissolve into another one. He tried, vainly, to swim up-stream against the smooth impalpable fatal current. He tried to

dam up Time, to deepen the stream so that he could bathe in it carelessly. Time, he said, is life; and life is God; time, then, is little bits of God. Those who waste their time in vulgarity or folly are the true atheists.

One of the things that struck him about the city was its heedlessness of Time. On every side he saw people spending it without adequate return. Perhaps he was young and doctrinaire: but he devised this theory for himself—all time is wasted that does not give you some awareness of beauty or wonder. In other words, "the days that make us happy make us wise," he said to himself, quoting Masefield's line. On that principle, he asked, how much time is wasted in this city? Well, here are some six million people. To simplify the problem (which is permitted to every philosopher) let us (he said) assume that 2,350,000 of those people have spent a day that could be called, on the whole, happy: a day in which they have had glimpses of reality; a day in which they feel satisfaction. (That was, he felt, a generous allowance.) Very well, then, that leaves 3,650,000 people whose day has been unfruitful: spent in uncongenial work, or in sorrow,

suffering, and talking nonsense. This city, then, in one day, has wasted 10,000 years, or 100 centuries. One hundred centuries squandered in a day! It made him feel quite ill, and he tore up the scrap of paper on which he had been figuring.

This was a new, disconcerting way to think of the subject. We are accustomed to consider Time only as it applies to ourselves, forgetting that it is working upon everyone else simultaneously. Why, he thought with a sudden shock, if only 36,500 people in this city have had a thoroughly spendthrift and useless day, that means a net loss of a century! If the War, he said to himself, lasted over 1,500 days and involved more than 10,000,000 men, how many aeons——

He used to think about these things during quiet evenings in the top-floor room at Mrs. Purp's. Occasionally he went home at night still wearing his store clothes, because it pleased good Mrs. Purp so much. She felt that it added glamour to her house to have him do so, and always called her husband, a frightened silent creature with no collar and a humble air, up from the basement to admire. Mr. Purp's time, Gissing suspected, was

irretrievably wasted—a good deal of it, to judge by his dusty appearance, in rolling around in ash-cans or in the company of the neighbourhood bootlegger; but then, he reflected, in a charitable seizure, you must not judge other people's time-spendings by a calculus of your own.

Perhaps he himself was growing a little miserly in this matter. Indulging in the rare, the sovereign luxury of thinking, he had suddenly become aware of time's precious fluency, and wondered why everyone else didn't think about it as passionately as he did. In the privacy of his room, weary after the day afoot, he took off his cutaway coat and trousers and enjoyed his old habit of stretching out on the floor for a good rest. There he would lie, not asleep, but in a bliss of passive meditation. He even grudged Mrs. Purp the little chats she loved—she made a point of coming up with clean towels when she knew he was in his room, because she cherished hearing him talk. When he heard her knock, he had to scramble hastily to his feet, get on his clothes, and pretend he had been sitting calmly in the rocking chair. It would never do to let her find him sprawled on the floor. She had an almost pain-

ful respect for him. Once, when prospective lodgers were bargaining for rooms, and he happened to be wearing his Beagle and Company attire, she had asked him to do her the favour of walking down the stairs, so that the visitors might be impressed by the gentility of the establishment.

Of course he loved to waste time—but in his own way. He gloated on the irresponsible vacancy of those evening hours, when there was nothing to be done. He lay very still, hardly even thinking, just feeling life go by. Through the open window came the lights and noises of the street. Already his domestic life seemed dim and far away. The shrill appeals of the puppies, their appalling innocent comments on existence, came but faintly to memory. Here, where life beat so much more thickly and closely, was the place to be. Though he had solved nothing, yet he seemed closer to the heart of the mystery. Entranced, he felt time flowing on toward him, endless in sweep and fulness. There is only one success, he said to himself—to be able to spend your life in your own way, and not to give others absurd maddening claims upon it. Youth, youth

is the only wealth, for youth has Time in its purse!

In the store, however, philosophy was laid aside. A kind of intoxication possessed him. Never before had old Mr. Beagle (watching delightedly from the mezzanine balcony) seen such a floor-walker. Gissing moved to and fro exulting in the great tide of shopping. He knew all the best customers by name and had learned their peculiarities. If a shower came up and Mrs. Mastiff was just leaving, he hastened to give her his arm as far as her limousine, boosting her in so expeditiously that not a drop of wetness fell upon her. He took care to find out the special *plat du jour* of the store's lunch room, and seized occasion to whisper to Mrs. Dachshund, whose weakness was food, that the filet of sole was very nice to-day. Mrs. Pomeranian learned that giving Gissing a hint about some new Parisian importations was more effective than a half page ad. in the Sunday papers. Within a few hours, by a judicious word here and there, he would have a score of ladies hastening to the millinery salon. A pearl necklace of great value, which Mr. Beagle had rebuked the jewellery buyer for getting, because it seemed

more appropriate for a dealer in precious stones than for a department store, was disposed of almost at once. Gissing casually told Mrs. Mastiff that he had heard Mrs. Sealyham intended to buy it. As for Mrs. Dachshund, who had had a habit of lunching at Delmonico's, she now was to be seen taking tiffin at Beagle's almost daily. There were many husbands who would have been glad to shoot him at sight on the first of the month, had they known who was the real cause of their woe.

Indeed, Gissing had raised floorwalking to a new level. He was more prime minister than a mere patroller of aisles. With sparkling eye, with unending curiosity, tact, and attention, he moved quietly among the throng. He realized that shopping is the female paradise; that spending money she has not earned is the only real fun an elderly and wealthy lady can have; and if to this primitive shopping passion can be added the delights of social amenity—flattery, courtesy, good-humoured flirtation—the snare is complete.

But all this is not accomplished without rousing the jealousy of rivals. Among the other floorwalkers, and particularly in the gorgeously uniformed attendant at the front door (who was

outraged by Gissing's habit of escorting special customers to their motors) moved anger, envy, and sneers. Gissing, completely absorbed in the fascination of his work, was unaware of this hostility, as he was equally unaware of the amazed satisfaction of his employer. He went his way with naïve and unconscious pleasure. It did not take long for his enemies to find a fulcrum for their chagrin. One evening, after closing, when he sat in the dressing room, with his feet in the usual tub of hot water, placidly reviewing the day's excitements and smoking his pipe, the superintendent burst in.

"Hey!" he exclaimed. "Don't you know smoking's forbidden? What do you want to do, get our fire insurance cancelled? Get out of here! You're fired!"

It did not occur to Gissing to question or protest. He had known perfectly well that smoking was not allowed. But he was like the stage hand behind the scenes who concluded it was all right to light a cigarette because the sign only said SMOKING FORBIDDEN, instead of SMOKING STRICTLY FORBIDDEN. He had not troubled his mind about it, one way or another.

He had drawn his salary that evening, and his first thought was, Well, at any rate I've earned enough to pay for the clothes. He had been there exactly four weeks. Quite calmly, he lifted his feet out of the tub and began to towel them daintily. The meticulous way he dried between his toes was infuriating to the superintendent.

"Have you any children?" Gissing asked, mildly.

"What's that to you?" snapped the other.

"I'll sell you this bathtub for a quarter. Take it home to them. They probably need it."

"You get out of here!" cried the angry official.

"You'd be surprised," said Gissing, "how children thrive when they're bathed regularly. Believe me, I know."

He packed his formal clothes in a neat bundle, left the bathtub behind, surrendered his locker key, and walked toward the employees' door, escorted by his bristling superior. As they passed through the empty aisles, scene of his brief triumph, he could not help gazing a little sadly. True merchant to the last, a thought struck him. He scribbled a note on the back of a sales slip, and left it at Miss Whippet's post by the stocking counter. It said:—

MISS WHIPPET: *Show Mrs. Sealyham some of the bisque sports hose, Scotch wool, size 9. She's coming to-morrow. Don't let her get size 8½. They shrink.*

MR. GISSING.

At the door he paused, relit his pipe leisurely, raised his hat to the superintendent, and strolled away.

In spite of this nonchalance, the situation was serious. His money was at a low ebb. All his regular income was diverted to the support of the large household in the country He was too proud to appeal to his wealthy uncle. He hated also to think of Mrs. Purp's mortification if she learned that her star boarder was out of work. By a curious irony, when he got home he found a letter from Mrs. Spaniel:—

MR. GISHING, *dere friend, the pupeys are well, no insecks, and eat with nives and forx Groups is the fattest but Yelpers is the lowdest they send wags and lix and glad to here Daddy is doing so well in buisness with respects from*

MRS. SPANIEL.

He did not let Mrs. Purp know of the change in his condition, and every morning left his lodging

at the usual time. By some curious attraction he felt drawn to that downtown region where his kinsman's office was. This part of the city he had not properly explored.

It was a world wholly different from Fifth Avenue. There was none of that sense of space and luxury he had known on the wide slopes of Murray Hill. He wandered under terrific buildings, in a breezy shadow where javelins of colourless sunlight pierced through thin slits, hot brilliance fell in fans and cascades over the uneven terrace of roofs. Here was where husbands worked to keep Fifth Avenue going: he wondered vaguely whether Mrs. Sealyham had bought those stockings? One day he saw his uncle hurrying along Wall Street with an intent face. Gissing skipped into a doorway, fearing to be recognized. He knew that the old fellow would insist on taking him to lunch at the Pedigree Club, would talk endlessly, and ask family questions. But he was on the scent of matters that talk could not pursue.

He perceived a sense of pressure, of prodigious poetry and beauty and amazement. This was a strange jungle of life. Tall coasts of windows

stood up into the pure brilliant sky: against their feet beat a dark surf of slums. In one foreign street, too deeply trenched for sunlight, oranges were the only gold. The water, reaching round in two arms, came close: there was a note of husky summons in the whistles of passing craft. Almost everywhere, sharp above many smells of oils and spices, the whiff of coffee tingled his busy nose. Above one huge precipice stood a gilded statue—a boy with wings, burning in the noon. Brilliance flamed between the vanes of his pinions: the intangible thrust of that pouring light seemed about to hover him off into blue air.

The world of working husbands was more tender than that of shopping wives: even in all their business, they had left space and quietness for the dead. Sunken among the crags he found two graveyards. They were cups of placid brightness. Here, looking upward, it was like being drowned on the floor of an ocean of light. Husbands had built their offices half-way to the sky rather than disturb these. Perhaps they appreciate rest all the more, Gissing thought, because they get so little of it? Somehow he could not quite imagine

a graveyard left at peace in the shopping district. It would be bad for trade, perhaps? Even the churches on the Avenue, he had noticed, were huddled up and hemmed in so tightly by the other buildings that they had scarcely room to kneel. If I ever become a parson, he said (this was a fantastic dream of his), I will insist that all churches must have a girdle of green about them, to set them apart from the world.

The two little brown churches among the cliffs had been gifted with a dignity far beyond the dream of their builders. Their pointing spires were relieved against the enormous façades of business. What other altars ever had such a reredos? Above the strepitant racket of the streets, he heard the harsh chimes of Trinity at noonday—strong jags of clangour hurled against the great sounding-boards of buildings; drifting and dying away down side alleys. There was no soft music of appeal in the bronze volleying: it was the hoarse monitory voice of rebuke. So spoke the church of old, he thought: not asking, not appealing, but imperatively, sternly, as one born to command. He thought with new respect of Mr. Sealyham, Mr. Mastiff, Mr. Dachshund,

all the others who were powers in these fantastic flumes of stone. They were more than merely husbands of charge accounts—they were poets. They sat at lunch on the tops of their amazing edifices, and looked off at the blue.

Day after day went by, but with a serene fatalism Gissing did nothing about hunting a job. He was willing to wait until the last dollar was broken: in the meantime he was content. You never know the soul of a city, he said, until you are down on your luck. Now, he felt, he had been here long enough to understand her. She did not give her secrets to the world of Fifth Avenue. Down here, where the deep crevice of Broadway opened out into greenness, what was the first thing he saw? Out across the harbour, turned toward open sea—Liberty! Liberty Enlightening the World, he had heard, was her full name. Some had mocked her, he had also heard. Well, what was the gist of her enlightenment? Why this, surely: that Liberty could never be more than a statue: never a reality. Only a fool would expect complete liberty. He himself, with all his latitude, was not free. If he were, he would cook his meals

in his room, and save money—but Mrs. Purp was strict on that point. She had spoken scathingly of two young females she ejected for just that reason. Nor was Mrs. Purp free—she was ridden by the Gas Company. So it went.

It struck him, now he was down to about three dollars, that a generous gesture toward Fortune might be valuable. When you are nearly out of money, he reasoned, to toss coins to the gods—i. e., to buy something quite unnecessary—may be propitiatory. It may start something moving in your direction. It is the touch of bravado that God relishes. In a sudden mood of tenderness, he bought two dollars' worth of toys and had them sent to the children. He smiled to think how they would frolic over the jumping rabbit. He sent Mrs. Spaniel a postcard of the Aquarium.

There is a good deal more to this business than I had realized, he said, as he walked uptown through the East Side slums that hot night. The audacity, the vitality, the magnificence, are plain enough. But I seem to see squalor too, horror and pitiful dearth. I believe God is farther off

than I thought. Look here: if the more you know, the less you know about God, doesn't that mean that God is really enjoyed only by the completely simple—by faith, never by reason?

He gave twenty-five cents to a beggar, and said angrily: "I am not interested in a God who is known only by faith."

When he got uptown he was very tired and hungry. In spite of all Mrs. Purp's rules, he smuggled in an egg, a box of biscuits, a small packet of tea and sugar, and a tin of condensed milk. He emptied the milk into his shaving mug, and used the tin to boil water in, holding it over the gas jet. He was getting on finely when a sudden knock on the door made him jump. He spilled the hot water on his leg, and uttered a wild yell.

Mrs. Purp burst in, but she was so excited that she did not notice the egg seeping into the clean counterpane.

"Oh, Mr. Gissing," she exclaimed, "I've been waiting all evening for you to come in. Purp and I wondered if you'd seen this in the paper to-night? Purp noticed it in the ads., but we couldn't understand what it meant."

She held out a page of classified advertising, in which he read with amazement:

PERSONAL

If MR. GISSING, late floorwalker at Beagle and Company, will communicate with Mr. Beagle Senior, he will hear matters greatly to his advantage.

CHAPTER NINE

THERE had been great excitement in the private offices of Beagle and Company after Gissing's sudden disappearance. Old Mr. Beagle was furious, and hotly scolded his son. In spite of his advanced age, Beagle senior was still an autocrat and insisted on regulating the details of the great business he had built up. "You numbskull!" he shouted to Beagle junior, "that fellow was worth any dozen others in the place, and you let him be fired by a mongrel superintendent."

"But, Papa," protested the vice-president, "the superintendent had to obey the rules. You know how strict the underwriters are about smoking. Of course he should have warned Gissing, instead of discharging him——"

"Rules!" interrupted old Beagle fiercely—"Rules don't apply in a case like this. I tell you that fellow has a genius for storekeeping.

Haven't I watched him on the floor? I've never seen one like him. What's the good of your newfangled methods, your card indexes and overhead charts, when you haven't even got a record of his address?"

Growling and showing his teeth, the head of the firm plodded stiffly downstairs and discharged the superintendent himself. Already he saw signs of disorganization in the main aisle. Miss Whippet was tearful: customers were waiting impatiently to have exchange slips O. K.'d: Mrs. Dachshund was turning over some jewelled lorgnettes, but it was plain that she was only "looking," and had no intention to purchase.

So when, after many vain inquiries, the advertisement reached its target, the old gentleman welcomed Gissing with genuine emotion. He received him into his private office, locked the door, and produced a decanter. Evidently beneath his irritable moods he had sensibilities of his own.

"I have given my life to trade," he said, "and I have grown weary of watching the half-hearted simpletons who imagine they can rise to the top by thinking more about themselves than they do

about the business. You, Mr. Gissing, have won my heart. You see storekeeping as I do—a fine art, an absorbing passion, a beautiful, thrilling sport. It is an art as lovely and subtle as the theatre, with the same skill in wooing and charming the public."

Gissing bowed, and drank Mr. Beagle's health, to cover his astonishment. The aged merchant fixed him with a glittering eye.

"I can see that storekeeping is your genius in life. I can see that you are naturally consecrated to it. My son is a good steady fellow, but he lacks the divine gift. I am getting old. We need new fire, new brains, in the conduct of this business. I ask you to forgive the unlucky blunder we made lately, and devote yourself to us."

Gissing was very much embarrassed. He wanted to say that if he was going to consecrate himself to floorwalking, he would relish a raise in salary; but old Beagle was so tremulous and kept blowing his nose so loudly that Gissing doubted if he could make himself heard.

"I want you to take a position as General Manager," said Mr. Beagle, "with a salary of ten thousand a year."

He rose and threw open a mahogany door that led out of his own sanctum. "Here is your office," he said.

The bewildered Gissing looked about the room —the mahogany flat-topped desk with a great sheet of plate glass shining greenly at its thick edges; an inkwell, pens and pencils, a little glass bowl full of bright paper-clips; one of those rocking blotters that are so tempting; a water cooler which just then uttered a seductive gulping bubble; an electric fan, gently humming; wooden trays for letters and memoranda; on one wall a great chart of names, lettered *Organization of Personnel;* a nice domestic-looking hat-and-coat stand; a soft green rug——

Ah, how alluring it all was!

Mr. Beagle pointed to the outer door of the room, which had a frosted pane. Through the glass the astounded floorwalker could read the words

GENERAL MANAGER
MR. GISSING

What a delightful little room to meditate in. From the broad windows he could see the whole

shining tideway of Fifth Avenue, passing lazily in the warm sunlight. He turned to Mr. Beagle, greatly moved.

The next day an advertisement appeared in the leading papers, to this effect:—

BEAGLE AND COMPANY

take pleasure in announcing to
their patrons and friends that

MR. GISSING

has been admitted to the firm in
the status of *General Manager*

Je Maintiendrai

Mrs. Purp's excitement at this is easier imagined than described. Her only fear was that now she would lose her best lodger. She made Purp go out and buy a new shirt and a collar; she told Gissing, rather pathetically, that she intended to have the whole house repapered in the fall. The big double suite downstairs, which could be used as bedroom and sitting-room, she suggested as a comfortable change. But Gissing

preferred to remain where he was. He had grown fond of the top floor.

Certainly there was an exhilaration in his new importance and prosperity. The store buzzed with the news. At his request, Miss Whippet was promoted to the seventh floor to be his secretary. It was delightful to make his morning tour of inspection through the vast building. Mr. Hound, the store detective, loved to tell his cronies how suspiciously he had followed "The Duke" that first day. As Gissing moved through the busy departments he saw eyes following him, tails wagging. Customers were more flattered than ever by his courteous attentions. One day he even held a little luncheon party in the restaurant, at which Mrs. Dachshund, Mrs. Mastiff, and Mrs. Sealyham were his guests. He invited their husbands, but the latter were too busy to come. It would have been more prudent of them to attend. That afternoon Mrs. Dachshund, carried away by enthusiasm, bought a platinum wrist-watch. Mrs. Mastiff bought a diamond dog-collar. Mrs. Sealyham, whose husband was temporarily embarrassed in Wall Street, contented herself with a Sheraton chifforobe.

But it began to be evident that his delightful little office was not going to be a shrine for quiet meditation. His vanity had been pleased by the large advertisement about him, but he suddenly realized the poison that lies in printer's ink. Almost overnight, it seemed, he had been added to ten thousand mailing lists. Little Miss Whippet, although she was fast at typewriting, was hard put to it to keep up with his correspondence. She quivered eagerly over her machine, her small paws flying. New pink ribbons gleamed through her translucent summery georgette blouse. They were her flag of exultation at her surprising rise in life. She felt it was immensely important to get all these letters answered promptly.

And so did Gissing. In his new zeal, and in his innocent satisfaction at having entered the inner circle of Big Business, he insisted on answering everything. He did not realize that dictating letters is the quaint diversion of business men, and that most of them mean nothing. It is simply the easiest way of assuring yourself that you are busy.

This job was no sinecure. Old Mr. Beagle had so much affectionate confidence in Gissing that he

referred almost everything to him for decision. Mr. Beagle junior, perhaps a little annoyed at the floorwalker's meteoric translation, spent the summer afternoons at golf. The infinite details of a great business crowded upon him. Inexperienced, he had not learned the ways in which seasoned "executives" protect themselves against useless intrusion. His telephone buzzed like a hornet. Not five minutes went by without callers or interruptions of some sort.

Most amazing of all, he found, was the miscellaneous passion for palaver displayed by Big Business. Immediately he was invited to join innumerable clubs, societies, merchants' associations. Every day would arrive letters, on heavily embossed paper—"The Sales Managers Club will hold a round-table discussion on Friday at one o'clock. We would greatly appreciate it if you would be with us and say a few words."—"Will you be our guest at the monthly dinner of the Fifth Avenue Guild, and give us any preachment that is on your mind?"—"The Merchandising Uplift Group of Murray Hill will meet at the Commodore for an informal lunch. It has been suggested that you contribute to the dis-

cussion on Underwriting Overhead."—"The Executives Association plans a clambake and barbecue at the Barking Rock Country Club. Around the bonfire a few impromptu remarks on Business Cycles will be called for. May we count on you?" —"Will you address the Convention of Knitted Bodygarment Buyers, on whatever topic is nearest your heart?"—"Will you write for *Bunion and Callous*, the trade organ of the Floorwalkers' Union, a thousand-word review of your career?" —"Will you broadcast a twenty-minute talk on Department Store Ethics, at the radio station in Newark? 250,000 radio fans will be listening in."

New to the strange and high-spirited world of "executives," it was natural that Gissing did not realize that the net importance of this kind of thing was absolute zero. It did strike him as odd, perhaps, that merchants did not dare to go on a junket or plan a congenial dinner without pretending to themselves that it had some business significance. But, having been so amazingly lifted into this atmosphere of great affairs, he felt it was his duty to the store to play the game according to the established rules. He was borne along on a roaring spate of conferences,

telephone calls, appointments, Rotarian lunches, Chamber of Commerce dinners, picnics to talk tariff, house-parties to discuss demurrage, tennis tournaments to settle the sales-tax, golf foursomes to regulate price-maintenance. Of all these matters he knew nothing whatever; and he also saw that as far as the business of Beagle and Company was concerned it would be better not to waste his time on such side-issues. The way he could really be of service was in the store itself, tactfully lubricating that complicated engine of goods and personalities. But he learned to utter, when called upon, a few suave generalities, barbed with a rollicking story. This made him always welcome. He was of a studious disposition, and liked to examine this queer territory of life with an unprejudiced eye. After all, his inward secret purpose had nothing to do with the success or failure of retail trade. He was still seeking a horizon that would stay blue when he reached it.

More and more he was interested to perceive how transparent the mummery of business was. He was interested to note how persistently men fled from success, how carefully most of them avoided the obvious principles of utility, honesty,

prudence, and courtesy, which are inevitably rewarded. These sagacious, humorous fellows who were amusing themselves with twaddling trade apothegms and ridiculous banqueteering solemnities, surely they were aware that this had no bearing upon their own jobs? He suspected that it was all a feverish anodyne to still some inward unease. Since they must (not being fools) be aware that these antics were mere subtraction of time from their business, the obvious conclusion was, they were not happy with business. There was some strange wistfulness in the conduct of Big Business Dogs, he thought. Under the pretence of transacting affairs, they were really trying to discover something that had eluded them.

The same thing, strangely enough, seemed to be going on in a sphere of which he knew nothing, the world of art. He gathered from the papers that writers, painters, musicians, were holding shindies almost every night, at which delightful rebels, too busy to occupy themselves with actual creation, talked charmingly about their plans. Poets were reading poems incessantly, forgetting to write any. Much of the newspaper comment on literature made him shudder, for though this

was a province quite strange to him, he had sound instincts. He discerned fatal ignorance and absurdity between the pompous lines. Yet, in its own way, it seemed a bold and honest ignorance. Were these, too, like the wistful executives, seeking where the blue begins?

But what was this strange agitation that forbade his fellow-creatures from enjoying the one thing that makes achievement possible—Solitude? He himself, so happy to be left alone—was no one else like that? And yet this very solitude that he craved and revelled in was, by a sublime paradox, haunted by mysterious loneliness. He felt sometimes as though his heart had been broken off from some great whole, to which it yearned to be reunited. It felt like a bone that had been buried, which God would some day dig up. Sometimes, in his cynomorphic conception of deity, he felt near him the thunder of those mighty paws. In rare moments of silence he gazed from his office window upon the sun-gilded, tempting city. Her madness was upon him—her splendid craze of haste, ambition, pride. Yet he wondered. This God he needed, this liberating horizon, was it after all in the cleverest of hiding-

places—in himself? Was it in his own undeluded heart?

Miss Whippet came scurrying in to say that the Display Manager begged him to attend a conference. The question of apportioning window space to the various departments was to be reconsidered. Also, the book department had protested having rental charged against them for books exhibited merely to add a finishing touch to a furniture display. Other agenda: the Personnel Director wished an appointment to discuss the ruling against salesbitches bobbing their hair. The Commissary Department wished to present revised figures as to the economy that would be effected by putting the employees' cafeteria on the same floor as the store's restaurant. He must decide whether early closing on Saturdays would continue until Labor Day.

As he went about these and a hundred other fascinating trivialities, he had a painful sense of treachery to Mr. Beagle senior. The old gentleman was so touchingly certain that he had found in him the ideal shoulders on which to unload his honourable and crushing burden. With more than paternal pride old Beagle saw Gissing, evidently

urbane and competent, cheerfully circulating here and there. The shy angel of doubt that lay deep in Gissing's cider-coloured eye, the proprietor did not come near enough to observe.

If there is tragedy in our story, alas here it is. Gissing, incorrigible seceder from responsibilities that did not touch his soul, did not dare tell his benefactor the horrid truth. But the worm was in his heart. Late one night, in his room at Mrs. Purp's, he wrote a letter to Mr. Poodle. After mailing it at a street-box, he had a sudden pang. To the dreamer, decisions are fearful. Then he shook himself and ran lightly to a little lunchroom on Amsterdam Avenue, where he enjoyed doughnuts and iced tea. His mind was resolved. The doughnuts, by a simple symbolism, made him think of Rotary Clubs, also of millstones. No, he must be fugitive from honour, from wealth, from Chambers of Commerce. Fugitive from all save his own instinct. Those who have bound themselves are only too eager to see the chains on others. There was no use attempting to explain to Mr. Beagle—the dear old creature would not understand.

The next day, after happily and busily dis-

charging his duties, and staying late to clean up his desk, Gissing left Beagle and Company for good. The only thing that worried him, as he looked round his comfortable office for the last time, was the thought of little Miss Whippet's chagrin when she found her new promotion at an end. She had taken such delight in their mutual dignity. On the filing cabinet beside her typewriter desk was a pink geranium in a pot, which she watered every morning. He could not resist pulling out a drawer of her desk, and smiled gently to see the careful neatness of its compartments, with all her odds and ends usefully arranged. The ink-eraser, with an absurd little whisk attached to it for brushing away fragments of rubbed paper; the fascicle of sharpened pencils held together by an elastic band; the tiny phial of typewriter oil; a small box of peppermints; a crumpled handkerchief; the stenographic notebook with a pencil inserted at the blank page, so as to be ready for instant service the next day; the long paper-cutter for slitting envelopes; her memorandum pad, on which was written *Remind Mr. G. of Window Display Luncheon*—it seemed cruel to deprive her of all these innocent amuse-

ments in which she delighted so much. And yet he could not go on as a General Manager simply for the happiness of Miss Whippet.

In the foliage of the geranium, where he knew she would find it the first thing in the morning, he left a note:—

Miss Whippet: I am leaving the store to-night and will not be back. Please notify Mr. Beagle. Explain to him that I shall never take a position with one of his competitors; I am leaving not because I didn't enjoy the job, but because if I stayed longer I might enjoy it too much. Tell Mr. Beagle that I specially urge him to retain you as assistant to the new Manager, whoever that may be. You are entirely competent to attend to the routine, and the new Manager can spend all his time at business lunches.

Please inform the Display Managers' Club that I can't speak at their meeting to-morrow.

I wish you all possible good fortune.

Mr. Gissing.

As he passed through the dim and silent aisles of the store, he surveyed them again with mixed emotions. Here he might, apparently, have been king. But he had no very poignant regret. Another of his numerous selves, he reflected, had committed suicide. That was the right idea: to

keep sloughing them off, throwing overboard the unreal and factitious Gissings, paring them down until he discovered the genuine and inalienable creature.

And so, for the second time, he made a stealthy exit from the employees' door.

Four days later he read in the paper of old Mr. Beagle's death. There can be no doubt about it. The merchant died of a broken heart.

CHAPTER TEN

MR. POODLE'S reply was disappointing. He said:—

St. Bernard's Rectory,
September 1st.

MY DEAR MR. GISSING:

I regret that I cannot conscientiously see my way to writing to the Bishop in your behalf. Any testimonial I could compose would be doubtful at best, for I cannot agree with you that the Church is your true vocation. I do not believe that one who has deserted his family, as you have, and whose record (even on the most charitable interpretation) cannot be described as other than eccentric, would be useful in Holy Orders. You say that your life in the city has been a great purgation. If so, I suggest that you return and take up the burdens laid upon you. It has meant great mortification to me that one of my own parish has been the cause of these painful rumours that have afflicted our quiet community. Notwithstanding, I wish you well, and hope that chastening experience may bring you peace.

Very truly yours,

J. ROVER POODLE.

Gissing meditated this letter in the silence of a long evening in his room. He brought to the problem his favourite aid to clear thinking—strong coffee mixed with condensed milk. Mrs. Purp had made concession to his peculiarities when he had risen so high in the world: better to break any rules, she thought, than lose so notable a tenant. She had even installed a small gas-plate for him, so that he could brew his morning and evening coffee.

So he took counsel with his percolator, whose bubbling was a sound he found both soothing and stimulating. He regarded it as a kind of private oracle, with a calm voice of its own. He listened attentively as he waited for the liquid to darken. *Appeal—to—the—Bishop, Appeal—to—the—Bishop*, seemed to be the speech of the jetting gurgitation under the glass lid.

He determined to act upon this, and lay his case before Bishop Borzoi even without the introduction he had hoped for. Fortunately he still had some sheets of Beagle and Company note-paper, with the engraved lettering and *Office of the General Manager* embossed thereon. He was in some doubt as to the proper formality and style

of address in communicating with a Bishop: was it "Very Reverend," or "Right Reverend"? and which of these indicated a superior grade of reverendability? But he decided that a masculine frankness would not be amiss. He wrote:—

VERY RIGHT REVEREND BISHOP BORZOI,
Dear Bishop:—

May one of the least of your admirers solicit an interview with your very right reverence, to discuss matters pertaining to religion, theology, and a possible vacancy in the Church? If there are any sees outstanding, it would be a favour. This is very urgent. I enclose a stamped addressed envelope.

Respectfully yours,

MR. GISSING.

A prompt reply from the Bishop's secretary granted him an appointment.

Scrupulously attired in his tail-coat and silk hat, Gissing proceeded toward the rendezvous. To tell the truth, he was nervous: his mind flitted uneasily among possible embarrassments. Suppose Mr. Poodle had written to the Bishop to prejudice his application? Another, but more absurd, idea troubled him. One of the problems in visiting the houses of the Great (he had learned

in his brief career in Big Business) is to find the door-bell. It is usually mysteriously concealed. Suppose he should have to peer hopelessly about the vestibule, in a shameful and suspicious manner, until some flunky came out to chide? In the sunny park below the Cathedral he saw nurses sitting by their puppy-carriages; for an instant he almost envied their gross tranquillity. *They* have not got (he said to himself) to call on a Bishop!

He was early, so he strolled for a few minutes in the park that lies underneath that rocky scarp. On the summit, clear-surging against the blue, the great church rode like a ship on a long ridge of sea. The angel with a trumpet on the jut of the roof was like a valiant seaman in the crow's nest. His agitation was calmed by this noble sight. Yes, he said, the Church is a ship behind whose bulwarks I will find rest. She sails an unworldly sea: her crew are exempt from earthly ambition and fallacy.

He ran nimbly up the long steps that scale the cliff, and approached the episcopal residence. The bell was plainly visible. He rang, and presently came a tidy little housemaid. He had

meditated a form of words. It would be absurd to say "Is the Bishop in?" for he knew the Bishop *was* in. So he said "This is Mr. Gissing. I think the Bishop is expecting me."

Bishop Borzoi was an impressive figure—immensely tall and slender, with long, narrow ascetic face and curly white hair. He was surprisingly cordial.

"Ah, Mr. Gissing?" he said. "Sit down, sir. I know Beagle and Company very well. Too well, in fact—Mrs. Borzoi has an account there."

Gissing, feeling rather aghast and tentative, had no comment ready. He was still worrying a little as to the proper mode of address.

"It is very pleasant to find you Influential Merchants interested in the Church," continued the Bishop. "I often thought of approaching the late Mr. Beagle on the subject of a small contribution to the cathedral. Indeed, I have spent so much in your store that it would be only a fair return. Mr. Collie, of Greyhound, Collie and Company, has been very handsome with us: he has just provided for repaving the choir."

Gissing began to fear that the object of his

visit had perhaps been misunderstood, but the prelate's eyes were bright with benignant enthusiasm and he dared not interrupt.

"You inquired most kindly in your letter as to a possible vacancy in the Church. Indeed there is a niche in the transept that I should be happy to see filled. It is intended for some kind of memorial statue, and perhaps, in honour of the late Mr. Beagle——"

"I must explain, Sir Bishop," said Gissing, very much disturbed, "that I have left Beagle and Company. The contribution I wish to make to the Church is not a decorative one, I fear. It is myself."

"Yourself?" queried the Bishop, politely puzzled.

"Yes," stammered Gissing, "I—in fact, I am hoping to—to enter the ministry."

The Bishop was plainly amazed, and his long, aristocratic nose seemed longer than ever as he gazed keenly at his caller.

"But have you had any formal training in theology?"

"None, right reverend Bishop," said Gissing. "But it's this way," and, incoherently at first, but

with increasing energy and copious eloquence, he poured out the story of his mental struggles.

"This is singularly interesting," said the Bishop at length. "I can see that you are wholly lacking in the rudiments of divinity. Of modern exegesis and criticism you are quite innocent. But you evidently have something which is much rarer —what the Quakers call a *concern.* Of course you should really go to the theological seminary and establish this naif intuitive mysticism upon a disciplined basis. You will realize that we churchmen can only meet modern rationalism by a rationalism of our own—by a philosophical scholarship which is unshakable. I do not suppose that you can even harmonize the Gospels?"

Gissing ruefully admitted his ignorance.

"Well, at least I must make sure of a few fundamentals," said the Bishop. "Of course a symbological latitude is permissible, but there are some essentials of dogma and creed that may not be foregone."

He subjected the candidate to a rapid catechism. Gissing, in a state of mind curiously mingled of excitement and awe, found himself assenting to much that, in a calmer moment, he

would hardly have admitted; but having plunged so deep into the affair he felt it would be the height of discourtesy to give negative answers to any of the Bishop's queries. By dint of hasty mental adjustments and symbolic interpretations, he satisfied his conscience.

"It is very irregular," the Bishop admitted, "but I must confess that your case interests me greatly. Of course I cannot admit you to ordination until you have passed through the regular theological curriculum. Yet I find you singularly apt for one without proper training."

He brooded a while, fixing the candidate with a clear darkly burning eye.

"It struck me that you were a trifle vague upon some of the Articles of Religion, and the Table of Kindred and Affinity. You must remember that these articles are not to be subjected to your own sense or comment, but must be taken in the literal and grammatical meaning. However, you show outward and visible signs of an inward and spiritual grace. It so happens that I know of a small chapel, in the country, that has been closed for lack of a minister. I can put you in charge there as lay reader."

Gissing's face showed his elation.

"And wear a cassock?" he cried.

"Certainly not," said the Bishop sternly. "Not even a surplice. You must remember you have not been ordained. If you are serious in your zeal, you must work your way up gradually, beginning at the bottom."

"I have seen some of your cloth with a little purple dickey which looks very well in the aperture of the waistcoat," said Gissing humbly. "How long would it take me to work up to that?"

Bishop Borzoi, who had a sense of humour, laughed genially.

"Look here," he said. "It's a fine afternoon: I'll order my car and we'll drive out to Dalmatian Heights. I'll show you your chapel, and tell you exactly what your duties will be."

Gissing was startled. Dalmatian Heights was only a few miles from the Canine Estates. If the news should reach Mr. Poodle . . .

"Sir Bishop," he said nervously, "I begin to fear that perhaps after all I am unworthy. Now about those Articles of Religion: I may perhaps have given some of them a conjectural and com-

mentating assent. Possibly I have presumed too far——"

The Bishop was already looking forward to a ride into the country with his unusual novice.

"Not at all, not at all," he said cheerily. "In a mere lay reader, a slight laxity is allowable. You understand, of course, that you are expressly restricted from the pulpit. You will have to read the lessons, conduct the service, and may address the congregation upon matters not homiletic nor doctrinal; preaching and actual entry into the pulpit are defended. But I see excellent possibility in you. Perform the duties punctually in this very lowly office, and high ranks of service in the church militant will be open."

He put on a very fine shovel-hat, and led the way to his large touring car.

It was a very uncomfortable ride for Gissing. A silk hat is the least stable apparel for swift motoring, and the chauffeur drove at high speed. The Bishop, leaning back in the open tonneau, crossed one delicately slender shank over another, gazed in a kind of ecstasy at the countryside, and talked gaily about his days as a young curate. Gissing sat holding his hat on. He saw only too

well that, by the humiliating oddity of chance, they were going to take the road that led exactly past his own house. He could only hope that Mrs. Spaniel and the various children would not be visible, for explanations would be too complicated. Desperately he praised the view to be obtained on another road, but Bishop Borzoi was too interested in his own topic to pay much attention.

"By the way," said the latter, as they drew near the familiar region, "I must introduce you to Miss Airedale. She lives in the big place on the hill over there. Her family always used to attend what I will now call *your* chapel; she is a very ardent churchgoer, and it was a sincere grief to her when the place had to be closed. You will find her a great aid and comfort; not only that, she is—what one does not always find in the devouter members of her sex—young and beautiful. I think I understood you to say you are a bachelor?"

They were approaching the last turning at which it was still possible to avoid the fatal road, and Gissing's attention was divided.

"Yes, after a fashion," he replied. "Bishop,

do you know that road down into the valley? The view is really superb—Yes, that road—Oh, no, I am a bachelor——"

It was too late. The chauffeur, unconscious of this private crisis, was spinning along the homeward way. With a tender emotion Gissing saw the spires of the poplar trees, the hemlocks down beyond the pond, the fringe of woods that concealed the house until you were quite upon it——

The car swerved suddenly and the driver only saved it by a quick and canny manœuvre from going down the bank. He came to a stop, and almost from underneath the rear wheels appeared a scuffling dusty group of youngsters who had been playing in the road. There they were—Bunks, Groups, and Yelpers (inordinately grown!) and two of the Spaniels. Their clothes were deplorable, their faces grimed, their legs covered with burrs, their whole demeanour was ragamuffin and wild: yet Gissing felt a pang of pride to see his godchildren's keen, independent bearing contrasted with the rowdier, disreputable look of the young Spaniels. Quickly he averted his head to escape recognition. But the urchins were all gaping at the Bishop's shovel hat.

"Hot dog!" cried Yelpers. "Some hat!"

To his horror, Gissing now saw Mrs. Spaniel, hastening in alarm down from the house, spilling potatoes from her apron as she ran. He hurriedly urged the driver to proceed.

"What terrible looking children," observed the Bishop, who seemed fascinated by their stare. "Really, my good sister," he said to Mrs. Spaniel, who was now panting by the running board; "you must keep them off the road or someone will get hurt."

Gissing was looking for an imaginary object on the floor of the car. To his great relief he heard the roar of the motor as they started again. But he sat up a little too soon. A simultaneous roar of "Daddy!" burst from the trio.

"What was that they were shouting at us?" inquired the Bishop, looking back.

Gissing shook his head. He was too overcome to speak.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

THE little chapel at Dalmatian Heights sat upon a hill, among a grove of pines, the most romantic of all trees. Life, a powerful but clumsy dramatist, does not reject the most claptrap "situations," which a sophisticated playwright would discard as too obvious. For this sandy plateau, strewn with satiny pine needles, was the very horizon that had looked so blue and beckoning from the little house by the pond. Not far away was the great Airedale estate, which Gissing had known only at an admiring distance—and now he was living there as an honoured guest.

The Bishop had taken him to call upon the Airedales; and they, delighted that the chapel was to be re-opened, had insisted upon his staying with them. The chapel, in fact, was a special interest with Mr. Airedale, who had been a leading contributor toward its erection. Gissing was

finding that life seemed to be continually putting him into false positions; and now he discovered, somewhat to his chagrin, that the lovely little shrine of St. Spitz, whose stained windows glowed like rubies in its cloister of dark trees, was rather a fashionable hobby among the wealthy landowners of Dalmatian Hills. It had been closed all summer, and they had missed it. The Bishop, in his airy and indefinite way, had not made it quite plain that Gissing was only a lay reader; and in spite of his embarrassed disclaimers, he found himself introduced by Mr. Airedale to the country-house clique as the new "vicar."

But at any rate it was lucky that the Airedales had insisted on taking him in as a guest; for he had learned from the Bishop (just as the latter was leaving) that there was no stipend attached to the office of lay reader. Fortunately he still had much of the money he had saved from his salary as General Manager. And whatever sense of anomaly he felt was quickly assuaged by the extraordinary comfort and novelty of his environment. In the great Airedale mansion he experienced for the first time that ultimate triumph of civilization—a cup of tea served in bed before

breakfast, with slices of bread-and-butter of tenuous and amazing fragile thinness. He was pleased, too, with the deference paid him as a representative of the cloth, even though it compelled him to a solemnity he did not inwardly feel. But most of all, undoubtedly, he was captivated by the loveliness and warmth of Miss Airedale.

The Bishop had not erred. Admiring the aristocratic Roman trend of her brow and nose; the proud, inquisitive carriage of her somewhat rectangular head; her admirable, vigorous figure and clear topaz eyes, Gissing was aware of something he had not experienced before—a disturbance both urgent and agreeable, in which the intellect seemed to play little part. He was startled by the strength of her attractiveness, amazed to learn how pleasing it was to be in her company. She was very young and brisk: wore clothes of a smart sporting cut, and was (he thought) quite divine in her riding breeches. But she was also completely devoted to the chapel, where she played the music on Sundays. She was a volatile creature, full of mischievous surprise: at their first music practice, after playing over some hymns on the pipe-organ, she burst into jazz, filling the quiet grove with

the clamorous syncope of *Paddy-Paws*, a favourite song that summer.

So into the brilliant social life of the Airedales and their friends he found himself suddenly pitchforked. In spite of the oddity of the situation, and of occasional anxiety when he considered the possibility of Mr. Poodle finding him out, he was very happy. This was not quite what he had expected, but he was always adaptable. Miss Airedale was an enchanting companion. In the privacy of his bedroom he measured himself for a pair of riding breeches and wrote to his tailor in town to have them made as soon as possible. He served the little chapel assiduously, though he felt it better to conceal from the Airedales the fact that he went there every day. He suspected they would think him slightly mad if they knew, so he used to pretend that he had business in town. Then he would slip away to the balsam-scented hilltop and be perfectly happy sweeping the chapel floor, dusting the pews, polishing the brasswork, rearranging the hymnals in the racks. He arranged with the milkman to leave a bottle of milk and some cinnamon buns at the chapel gate every morning, so he had a cheerful and

stealthy little lunch in the vestry-room, though always a trifle nervous lest some of his parishioners should discover him.

He practised reading the lessons aloud at the brass lectern, and discovered how easy is dramatic elocution when you are alone. He wished it were possible to hold a service daily. For the first time he was able to sing hymns as loud as he liked. Miss Airedale played the organ with emphatic fervour, and the congregation, after a little hesitation, enjoyed the lusty sincerity of a hymn well trolled. Some of his flock, who had previously relished taking part in the general routine of the service, were disappointed by his zeal, for Gissing insisted on doing everything himself. He rang the bell, ushered the congregation to their seats, read the service, recited the Quadrupeds' Creed, led the choir, gave out as many announcements as he could devise, took up the collection, and at the close skipped out through the vestry and was ready and beaming in the porch before the nimblest worshipper had reached the door. On his first Sunday, indeed, he carried enthusiasm rather too far: in an innocent eagerness to prolong the service as much as possible,

and being too excited to realize quite what he was doing, he went through the complete list of supplications for all possible occasions. The congregation were startled to find themselves praying simultaneously both for rain and for fair weather.

In a cupboard in the vestry-room he had found an old surplice hanging; he took it down, tried it on before the mirror, and wistfully put it back. To this symbolic vestment his mind returned as he sat solitary under the pine-trees, looking down upon the valley of home. It was the season of goldenrod and aster on the hillsides: a hot swooning silence lay upon the late afternoon. The weight and closeness of the air had struck even the insects dumb. Under the pines, generally so murmurous, there was something almost gruesome in the blank stillness: a suspension so absolute that the ears felt dull and sealed. He tried, involuntarily, to listen more clearly, to know if this uncanny hush were really so. There was a sense of being imprisoned, but only most delicately, in a spell, which some sudden cracking might disrupt.

The surplice tempted him strongly, for it sug-

gested the sermon he felt impelled to deliver, against the Bishop's orders. For the beautiful chapel in the piny glade was, somehow, false: or, at any rate, false for him. The architect had made it a dainty poem in stone and polished wood, but somehow God had evaded the neat little trap. Moreover, the God his well-bred congregation worshipped, the old traditionally imagined snow-white St. Bernard with radiant jowls of tenderness, shining dewlaps of love; paternal, omnipotent, calm—this deity, though sublime in its way, was too plainly an extension of their own desires. His prominent parishioners—Mr. Dobermann-Pinscher, Mrs. Griffon, Mrs. Retriever; even the delightful Mr. Airedale himself—was it not likely that they esteemed a deity everlastingly forgiving because they themselves felt need of forgiveness? He had been deeply shocked by the docility with which they followed the codes of the service: even when he had committed his blunder of the contradictory prayers, they had murmured the words automatically, without protest. To the terrific solemnities of the Litany they had made the responses with prompt gabbling precision, and with a rapidity

that frankly implied impatience to take the strain off their knees.

Somehow he felt that to account for a world of unutterable strangeness they had invented a God far too cheaply simple. His mood was certainly not one of ribald easy scoff. It was they (he assured himself) whose theology was essentially cynical; not he. He was a little weary of this just, charitable, consoling, hebdomadal God; this God who might be sufficiently honoured by a decorously memorized ritual. Yet was he too shallow? Was it not seemly that his fellows, bound on this dark, desperate venture of living, should console themselves with decent self-hypnosis?

No, he thought. No, it was not entirely seemly. If they pretended that their God was the highest thing knowable, then they must bring to His worship the highest possible powers of the mind. He had a strange yearning for a God less lazily conceived: a God perhaps inclement, awful, master of inscrutable principles. Yet was it desirable to shake his congregation's belief in their traditional divinity? He thought of them—so amiable, amusing, spirited and generous, but utterly un-

trained for abstract imaginative thought on any subject whatever. His own strange surmisings about deity would only shock and horrify them And after all, was it not exactly their simplicity that made them lovable? The great laws of truth would work their own destinies without assistance from him! Even if these pleasant creatures did not genuinely believe the rites they so politely observed (he knew they did not, for *belief* is an intellectual process of extraordinary range and depth), was it not socially useful that they should pretend to do so?

And yet—with another painful swing of the mind—was it necessary that Truth should be worshipped with the aid of such astonishingly transparent formalisms, hoaxes, and mummeries? Alas, it seemed that this was an old, old struggle that must be troublesomely fought out, again and again down the generations. Prophets were twice stoned—first in anger; then, after their death, with a handsome slab in the graveyard. But words uttered in sincerity (he thought) never fail of some response. Though he saw his fellows leashed with a heavy chain of ignorance, stupidity, passion, and weakness, yet he divined in life

some inscrutable principle of honour and justice; some unreckonable essence of virtue too intimate to understand; some fumbling aspiration toward decency, some brave generosity of spirit, some cheerful fidelity to Beauty. He could not see how, in a world so obviously vast and uncouth beyond computation, they could find a puny, tidy, assumptive, scheduled worship so satisfying. But perhaps, since all Beauty was so staggering, it was better they should cherish it in small formal minims. Perhaps in this whole matter there was some lovely symbolism that he did not understand.

The soft brightness was already lifting into upper air, a mingled tissue of shadows lay along the valley. In the magical clarity of the evening light he suddenly felt (as one often does, by unaccountable planetary instinct) that there was a new moon. Turning, he saw it, a silver snipping daintily afloat; and not far away, an early star. He had found no creed in the prayer-book that accounted for the stars. Here, at the bottom of an ocean of sky, we look aloft and see them thick-speckled—mere barnacles, perhaps, on the keel of some greater ship of space. He re-

membered how at home there had been a certain burning twinkle that peeped through the screen of the dogwood tree. As he moved on his porch, it seemed to flit to and fro, appearing and vanishing. He was often uncertain whether it was a firefly a few yards away, or a star the other side of Time. Possibly Truth was like that.

There was a light swift rustle behind him, and Miss Airedale appeared.

"Hullo!" she said. "I wondered where you were. Is this how you spend your afternoons, all alone?"

Stars, creeds, cosmologies, promptly receded into remote perspective and had to shift for themselves. It was true that Gissing had somewhat avoided her lately, for he feared her fascination. He wished nothing else to interfere with his search for what he had not yet found. Postpone the female problem to the last, was his theory: not because it was insoluble, but because the solution might prove to be less interesting than the problem itself. But side by side with her, she was irresistible. A skittish brightness shone in her eyes.

"Great news!" she exclaimed. "I've persuaded

Papa to take us all down to Atlantic City for a couple of days."

"Wonderful!" cried Gissing. "Do you know, I've never been to the seashore."

"Don't worry," she replied. "I won't let you see much of the ocean. We'll go to the Traymore, and spend the whole time dancing in the Submarine Grill."

"But I must be back in time for the service on Sunday," he said.

"We're going to leave first thing in the morning. We'll go in the car, and I'll drive. Will you sit with me in the front seat?"

"Watch me!" replied Gissing gallantly.

"Come on then, or you'll be late for dinner. I'll race you home!" And she was off like a flash.

But in spite of Miss Airedale's threat, at Atlantic City they both fell into a kind of dreamy reverie. The wine-like tingle of that salty air was a quiet drug. The apparently inexhaustible sunshine was sharpened with a faint sting of coming autumn. Gissing suddenly remembered that it was ages since he had simply let his mind run slack and allowed life to go by unstudied.

Mr. and Mrs. Airedale occupied a suite high up in the terraced mass of the huge hotel; they wrapped themselves in rugs and basked on their private balcony. Gissing and the daughter were left to their own amusements. They bathed in the warm September surf; they strolled the Boardwalk up beyond the old Absecon light, where the green glimmer of water runs in under the promenade. They sat on the deck of the hotel—or rather Miss Airedale sat, while Gissing, courteously attentive, leaned over her steamer-chair. He stood so for hours, apparently in devoted chat; but in fact he was half in dream. The smooth flow of the little rolling shays just below had a soothing hypnotic effect. But it was the glorious polished blue of the sea-horizon that bounded all his thoughts. Even while Miss Airedale gazed archly up at him, and he was busy with cheerful conversation, he was conscious of that broad band of perfect colour, monotonous, comforting, thrilling. For the first time he realized the great rondure of the world. His mind went back to the section of the prayer-book that had always touched him most pointedly—the "Forms of Prayer to be Used at Sea." In them

he had found a note of sincere terror and humility. And now he viewed the sea for the first time in this setting of notable irony. The open dazzle of placid elements, obedient only to some cosmic calculus, lay as a serene curtain against which the quaint flamboyance of the Boardwalk was all the more amusing. The clear rim of sea curving off into space drew him with painful curiosity. Here at last was what he had needed. The proud waters went over his soul. Here indeed the blue began.

He looked down at Miss Airedale, who had gone to sleep while waiting for him to say something. He tiptoed away and went to his room to write down some ideas. Against the wide challenge of that blue hemisphere, where half the world lay open and free to the eye, the Bishop's prohibition lost weight. He was resolved to preach a sermon.

At dusk he met Miss Airedale on the high balcony that runs around the reading-room of the hotel. They were quite alone up there. Along the Boardwalk, in the pale sentimental twilight, the translucent electric globes shone like a long string of pearls. She was very tempting in

a gay evening frock, and reproached him for having neglected her. She shivered a little in the cool wind coming off the darkening water. The weakness of the hour was upon him. He put his arm tenderly round her as they leaned over the parapet.

"See those darling children down on the sand," she said. "I do adore puppies, don't you?"

He remembered Groups, Bunks, and Yelpers. Nothing is so potent as the love of children when you are away from them. She gazed languishing at him; he responded with a generous pressure. But his alarmed soul thrilled with panic.

"You must excuse me a moment, while I dress for dinner," he said. He was strangely terrified by the look of secret understanding in her beautiful eyes. It seemed to imply some subtle, inexpressible pact. As a matter of truth, she was unconscious of it: it was only the old demiurge speaking in her; the old demiurge which was pursuing him just as ardently as he was trailing the dissolving blue of his dream. But he was much agitated as he went down in the elevator.

"Heavens," he said to himself; "are we all only toys in the power of these terrific instincts?"

For the first time he was informed of the infinite feminine capacity for being wooed.

That night they danced in the Submarine Grill. She floated in his embrace with triumphant lightness. Her eyes, utilized as temporary lamps by a lighting-circuit of which she was quite unaware, beamed with happy lustre. The lay reader, always docile to the necessities of occasion, murmured delightful trifles. But his private thoughts were as aloof and shining and evasive as the goldfish that twinkled in the glass pool overhead. He picked up her scarf and her handkerchief when she dropped them. He smiled vaguely when she suggested that she thought she could persuade Mr. Airedale to stay in Atlantic City over the week-end, and why worry about the service on Sunday? But when she and the yawning Mrs. Airedale had retired, he hastened to his chamber and packed his bag. Stealthily he went to the desk and explained that he was leaving unexpectedly on business, and that the bill should go to Mr. Airedale, whose guest he had been. He slipped away out of the side door, and caught the late train. Mrs. Airedale chaffed her daughter that night for whining in her sleep.

CHAPTER TWELVE

THE chapel of St. Spitz was crowded that fine Sunday morning, and the clang and thud of its bells came merrily through the thin quick air to worshippers arriving in their luxurious motors. The amiable oddity of the lay reader's demeanour as priest had added a zest to churchgoing. The congregation were particularly pleased, on this occasion, to see Gissing appear in surplice and stole. They had felt that his attire on the previous Sundays had been a little too informal. And when, at the time usually allotted to the sermon, Gissing climbed the pulpit steps, unfurled a sheaf of manuscript, and gazed solemnly about, they settled back into the pew cushions in a comfortable, receptive mood. They had a subconscious feeling that if their souls were to be saved, it was better to have it done with all the proper formalities. They did not

notice that he was rather pale, and that his nose twitched nervously.

"My friends," he said, "in this beautiful little chapel, on this airy hilltop, one might, if anywhere, speak with complete honesty. For you who gather here for worship are, in the main, people of great affairs; accustomed to looking at life with high spirit and with quick imagination. I will ask you then to be patient with me while I exhort you to carry into your religion the same enterprising and ambitious gusto that has made your worldly careers a success. You are accustomed to deal with great affairs. Let me talk to you about the Great Affairs of God."

Gissing had been far too agitated to be able to recognize any particular members of his audience. All the faces were fused into a common blur. Miss Airedale, he knew, was in the organ loft, but he had not seen her since his flight from Atlantic City, for he had removed from the Airedale mansion before her return, and had made himself a bed in the corner of the vestry-room. He feared she was angry: there had been a vigorous growling note in some of the bass pipes of the organ as she played the opening hymn. He had not seen

a tall white-haired figure who came into the chapel rather late, after the service had begun, and took a seat at the back. Bishop Borzoi had seized the opportunity to drive out to Dalmatian Heights this morning to see how his protégé was getting on. When the Bishop saw his lay reader appear in surplice and scarlet hood, he was startled. But when the amateur parson actually ascended the pulpit, the Bishop's face was a study. The hair on the back of his neck bristled slightly.

"It is so easy," Gissing continued, "to let life go by us in its swift amusing course, that sometimes it hardly seems worth while to attempt any bold strokes for truth. Truth, of course, does not need our assistance; it can afford to ignore our errors. But in this quiet place, among the whisper of the trees, I seem to have heard a disconcerting sound. I have heard laughter, and I think it is the laughter of God."

The congregation stirred a little, with polite uneasiness. This was not quite the sort of thing to which they were accustomed.

"Why should God laugh? I think it is because He sees that very often, when we pretend to be worshipping Him, we are really worshipping

and gratifying ourselves. I used the phrase 'Great Affairs.' The point I want to make is that God deals with far greater affairs than we have realized. We have imagined Him on too petty a scale. If God is so great, we must approach Him in a spirit of greatness. He is not interested in trivialities—trivialities of ritual, of creed, of ceremony. We have imagined a vain thing—a God of our own species; merely adding to the conception, to gild and consecrate, a futile fuzbuz of supernaturalism. My friends, the God I imagine is something more than a formula on Sundays and an oath during the week."

Those sitting in the rear of the Chapel were startled to hear a low rumbling sound proceeding from the diaphragm of the Bishop, who half rose from his seat and then, by a great effort of will, contained himself. But Gissing, rapt in his honourable speculations, continued with growing happiness.

"I ask you, though probably in vain, to lay aside for the moment your inherited timidities and conventions. I ask you to lay aside pride, which is the devil itself and the cause of most unhappi-

ness. I ask you to rise to the height of a great conception. To 'magnify' God is a common phrase in our observances. Then let us truly magnify Him—not minify, as the theologians do. If God is anything more than a social fetich, then He must be so much more that He includes and explains everything. It may sound inconceivable to you, it may sound sacrilegious, but I suggest to you that it is even possible God may be a biped——"

The Bishop could restrain himself no longer. He rose with flaming eyes and stood in the aisle. Mr. Airedale, Mr. Dobermann-Pinscher, and several other prominent members of the Church burst into threatening growls. A wild bark and clamour broke from Mr. Towser, the Sunday School superintendent, and his pupils, who sat in the little gallery over the door. And then, to Gissing's horror and amazement, Mr. Poodle appeared from behind a pillar where he had been chafing unseen. In a fierce tenor voice shaken with indignation he cried:

"Heretic and hypocrite! Pay no attention to his abominable nonsense! He deserted his family to lead a life of pleasure!"

"Seize him!" cried the Bishop in a voice of thunder.

The church was now in an uproar. A shrill yapping sounded among the choir. Mrs. Airedale swooned; the Bishop's progress up the aisle was impeded by a number of ladies hastening for an exit. Old Mr. Dingo, the sexton, seized the bell-rope in the porch and set up a furious pealing. Cries of rage mingled with hysterical howls from the ladies. Gissing, trembling with horror, surveyed the atrocious hubbub. But it was high time to move, or his retreat would be cut off. He abandoned his manuscript and bounded down the pulpit stairs.

"Unfrock him!" yelled Mr. Poodle.

"He's never been frocked!" roared the Bishop.

"Impostor!" cried Mr. Airedale.

"Excommunicate him!" screamed Mr. Towser.

"Take him before the consistory!" shouted Mr. Poodle.

Gissing started toward the vestry door, but was delayed by the mass of scuffling choir-puppies who had seized this uncomprehended diversion as a chance to settle some scores of their own. The clamour was maddening. The Bishop leapt

the chancel rail and was about to seize him when Miss Airedale, loyal to the last, interposed. She flung herself upon the Bishop.

"Run, run!" she cried. "They'll kill you!"

Gissing profited by this assistance. He pushed over the lectern upon Mr. Poodle, who was clutching at his surplice. He checked Mr. Airedale by hurling little Tommy Bull, one of the choir, bodily at him. Tommy's teeth fastened automatically upon Mr. Airedale's ear. The surplice, which Mr. Poodle was still holding, parted with a rip, and Gissing was free. With a yell of defiance he tore through the vestry and round behind the chapel.

He could not help pausing a moment to scan the amazing scene, which had been all Sabbath calm a few moments before. From the long line of motor cars parked outside the chapel incredible chauffeurs were leaping, hurrying to see what had happened. The shady grove shook with the hideous clamour of the bell, still wildly tolled by the frantic sexton. The sudden excitement had liberated private quarrels long decently repressed: in the porch Mrs. Retriever and Mrs. Dobermann-Pinscher were locked in combat.

With a splintering crash one of the choir-pups came sailing through a stained-glass window, evidently thrown by some infuriated adult. He recognized the voice of Mr. Towser, raised in vigorous lamentation. To judge by the sound, Mr. Towser's pupils had turned upon him and were giving him a bad time. Above all he could hear the clear war-cry of Miss Airedale and the embittered yells of Mr. Poodle. Then from the quaking edifice burst Bishop Borzoi, foaming with wrath, his clothes much tattered, and followed by Mr. Poodle, Mr. Airedale, and several others. They cast about for a moment, and then the Bishop saw him. With a joint halloo they launched toward him.

There was no time to lose. He fled down the shady path between the trees, but with a hopeless horror in his heart. He could not long outdistance such a runner as the Bishop, whose tremendous strides would surely overhaul him in the end. If only he had known how to drive a car, he might have commandeered one of the long row waiting by the gate. But he was no motorist. Miss Airedale could have saved him, in her racing roadster, but she had not emerged

from the mêlée in the chapel. Perhaps the Bishop had bitten her. His blood warmed with anger.

It happened that they had been mending the county highways, and a large steam roller stood a few hundred feet down the road, drawn up beside the ditch. Gissing knew that it was customary to leave these engines with the fire banked and a gentle pressure of steam simmering in the boiler. It was his only chance, and he seized it. But to his dismay, when he reached the machine, which lay just round a bend in the road, he found it shrouded with a huge tarpaulin. However, this suggested a desperate chance. He whipped nimbly inside the covering and hid in the coal-box. Lying there, he heard the chase go panting by.

As soon as he dared, he climbed out, stripped off the canvas, and gazed at the bulky engine. It was one of those very tall and impressive rollers with a canopy over the top. The machinery was not complicated, and the ingenuity of desperation spurred him on. Hurriedly he opened the draughts in the fire-box, shook up the coals, and saw the needle begin to quiver on

the pressure-gauge. He experimented with one or two levers and handles. The first one he touched let off a loud scream from the whistle. Then he discovered the throttle. He opened it a few notches, cautiously. The ponderous machine, with a horrible clanking and grinding, began to move forward.

A steam roller may seem the least helpful of all vehicles in which to conduct an urgent flight; but Gissing's reasoning was sound. In the first place, no one would expect to find a hunted fugitive in this lumbering, sluggish behemoth of the road. Secondly, sitting perched high up in the driving saddle, right under the canopy, he was not easily seen by the casual passer-by. And thirdly, if the pursuit came to close grips, he was still in a strategic position. For this, the most versatile of all land-machines except the military tank, can move across fields, crash through underbrush, and travel in a hundred places that would stall a motor car. He rumbled off down the road somewhat exhilarated. He found the scarlet stole twisted round his neck, and tied it to one of the stanchions of the canopy as a flag of defiance.

It was not long before he saw the posse of pursuit returning along the road, very hot and angry. He crunched along solemnly, busying himself to get up a strong head of steam. There they were, the Bishop, Mr. Poodle, Mr. Airedale, Mr. Dobermann-Pinscher, and Mr. Towser. Mr. Poodle was talking excitedly: the Bishop's tongue ran in and out over his gleaming teeth. He was not saying much, but his manner was full of deadly wrath. They paid no attention to the roller, and were about to pass it without even looking up, when Gissing, in a sudden fit of indignation, gave the wheel a quick twirl and turned his clumsy engine upon them. They escaped only by a hair's breadth from being flattened out like pastry. Then the Bishop, looking up, recognized the renegade. With a cry of anger they all leaped at the roller.

But he was so high above them, they had no chance. He seized the coal-scoop and whanged Mr. Poodle across the skull. The Bishop came dangerously near reaching him, but Gissing released a jet of scalding steam from an exhaust-cock, which gave the impetuous prelate much cause for grief. A lump of coal, accurately

thrown, discouraged Mr. Airedale. Mr. Towser, attacking on the other side of the engine, managed to scramble up so high that he carried away the embroidered stole, but otherwise the fugitive had all the best of it. Mr. Dobermann-Pinscher burned his feet trying to climb up the side of the boiler. From the summit of his uncouth vehicle Gissing looked down undismayed.

"Miserable freethinker!" said Borzoi. "You shall be tried by the assembly of bishops."

"In a mere lay reader," quoted Gissing, "a slight laxity is allowable. You had better go back and calm down the congregation, or they'll tear the chapel to bits. This kind of thing will have a very bad influence on church discipline."

They shouted additional menace, but Gissing had already started his deafening machinery and could not hear what was said. He left them bickering by the roadside.

For fear of further pursuit, he turned off the highway a little beyond, and rumbled noisily down a rustic lane between high banks and hedges where sumac was turning red. Strangely enough, there was something very comforting about his enormous crawling contraption. It was docile

and reliable, like an elephant. The crashing clangour of its movement was soon forgotten—became, in fact, an actual stimulus to thought. For the mere pleasure of novelty, he steered through a copse, and took joy in seeing the monster thrash its way through thickets and brambles, and then across a field of crackling stubble. Steering toward the lonelier regions of that farming country, presently he halted in a dingle of birches beside a small pond. He spent some time very happily, carefully studying the machinery. He found some waste and an oil-can in the tool-chest, and polished until the metal shone. The water looked rather low in the gauge, and he replenished it from the pool.

It was while grooming the roller that it struck him his own appearance was unusual for a highway mechanic. He was still wearing the famous floorwalker suit, which he had punctiliously donned every Sunday for chapel. But he had had to flee without a hat—even without his luggage, which was neatly packed in a bag in the vestry. That, he felt sure, Mr. Poodle had already burst open for evidences of heresy and schism. The pearly trousers were stained with

oil and coal-dust; the neat cutaway coat bore smears of engine-grease. As long as he stuck to the roller and the telltale garments, pursuit and identification would of course be easy enough. But he had taken a fancy to the machine: he decided not to abandon it yet.

Obviously it was better to keep to the roads, where the engine would at any rate be less surprisingly conspicuous, and where it would leave no trail. So he made a long circuit across meadows and pastures, carrying a devilish clamour into the quiet Sunday afternoon. Regaining a macadam surface, he set off at random, causing considerable annoyance to the motoring public. Finding that his cutaway coat caused jeers and merriment, he removed it; and when any one showed a disposition to inquire, he explained that he was doing penance for an ill-judged wager. His oscillating perch above the boiler was extraordinarily warm, and he bought a gallon jug of cider from a farmer by the way. Cheering himself with this, and reviewing in his mind the queer experiences of the past months, he went thundering mildly on.

At first he had feared a furious pursuit on the

part of the Bishop, or even a whole college of bishops, quickly mobilized for the event. He had imagined them speeding after him in a huge motor-bus, and himself keeping them at bay with lumps of coal. But gradually he realized that the Bishop would not further jeopardize his dignity, or run the risk of making himself ridiculous. Mr. Poodle would undoubtedly set the township road commissioner on his trail, and he would be liable to seizure for the theft of a steam roller. But that could hardly happen so quickly. In the meantime, a plan had been forming in his mind, but it would require darkness for its execution.

Darkness did not delay in coming. As he jolted cheerfully from road to road, holding up long strings of motors at every corner while he jovially held out his arm as a sign that he was going to turn, dark purple clouds were massing and piling up. Foreseeing a storm, he bought some provisions at a roadhouse, and turned into a field, where he camped in the lee of a forest of birches. He cooked himself an excellent supper, toasting bread and frankfurters in the firebox of the roller. With boiling water from a

steam-cock he brewed a panikin of tea; and sat placidly admiring the fawn-pink light on wide pampas of bronze grasses, tawny as a panther's hide. A strong wind began to draw from the southeast. He lit the lantern at the rear of the machine and by the time the rain came hissing upon the hot boiler, he was ready. Luckily he had saved the tarpaulin. He spread this on the ground underneath the roller, and curled up in it. The glow from the firebox kept him warm and dry.

"Summer is over," he said to himself, as he heard the clash and spouting of rain all about him. He lay for some time, not sleepy, thinking theology, and enjoying the close tumult of wind and weather.

People who have had an arm or a leg amputated, he reflected, say they can still feel pains in the absent member. Well, there's an analogy in that. Modern skepticism has amputated God from the heart; but there is still a twinge where the arteries were sewn up.

He slept peacefully until about two in the morning, except when a red-hot coal, slipping through the grate-bars, burned a lamentable hole

in his trousers. When he woke, the night still dripped, but was clear aloft. He started the engine and drove cautiously, along black slippery roads, to Mr. Poodle's house. In spite of the unavoidable racket, no one stirred: he surmised that the curate slept soundly after the crises of the day. He left the engine by the doorstep, pinning a note to the steering-wheel. It said:

TO REV. J. ROVER POODLE
this useful steam-roller
as a symbol of the theological mind
MR. GISSING

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

THE steamship *Pomerania*, which had sailed at noon, was a few hours out of port on a calm gray sea. The passengers, after the bustle of lunch and arranging their staterooms, had settled into their deck chairs and were telling each other how much they loved the ocean. Captain Scottie had taken his afternoon constitutional on his private strip of starboard deck just aft the bridge, and was sitting in his comfortable cabin expecting a cup of tea. He was a fine old sea-dog: squat, grizzled, severe, with wiry eyebrows, a short coarse beard, and watchful quick eyes. A characteristic Scot, beneath his reticent conscientious dignity there was abundant humour and affection. He would have been recognized anywhere as a sailor: those short solid legs were perfectly adapted for balancing on a rolling deck. He stood by habit as though he were leaning into a stiff gale. His mouth al-

ways held a pipe, which he smoked in short, brisk whiffs, as though expecting to be interrupted at any moment by an iceberg.

The steward brought in the tea-tray, and Captain Scottie settled into his large armchair to enjoy it. His eye glanced automatically at the barometer.

"A little wind to-night," he said, his nose wrinkling unconsciously as the cover was lifted from the dish of hot anchovy toast.

"Yes, sir," said the steward, but lingered, apparently anxious to speak further.

"Well, Shepherd?"

"Beg pardon, sir, but the Chief Steward wanted me to say they've found someone stowed away in the linen locker, sir. Queer kind of fellow, sir, talks a bit like a padre. 'E must've come aboard by the engine-room gangway, sir, and climbed into that locker near the barber shop."

The problem of stowaways is familiar enough to shipmasters. "Send him up to me," said the Captain.

A few minutes later Gissing appeared, escorted by a burly quartermaster. Even the experienced Captain admitted to himself that this was some-

thing new in the category of stowaways. Never before had he seen one in a braided cutaway coat and wedding trousers. It was true that the garments were in grievous condition, but they were worn with an air. The stowaway's face showed some embarrassment, but not at all the usual hangdog mien of such wastrels. Involuntarily his tongue moistened when he saw the tray of tea (for he had not eaten since his supper on the steam roller the night before), but he kept his eyes politely averted from the food. They rose to a white-painted girder that ran athwart the cabin ceiling. CERTIFIED TO ACCOMMODATE THE MASTER he read there, in letters deeply incised into the thick paint. "A good Christian ship," he said to himself. "It sounds like the Y. M. C. A." He was pleased to think that his suspicion was already confirmed: ships were more religious than anything on land.

The Captain dismissed the quartermaster, and addressed himself sternly to the culprit.

"Well, what have you to say for yourself?"

"Please, Captain," said Gissing politely, "do not allow your tea to get cold. I can talk while you eat."

Behind his grim demeanour the Captain was very near to smiling at this naïveté. No Briton is wholly implacable at tea-time, and he felt a genuine curiosity about this unusual offender.

"What was your idea in coming aboard?" he said. "Do you know that I can put you in irons until we get across, and then have you sent home for punishment? I suppose it's the old story: you want to go sight-seeing on the other side?"

"No, Captain," said Gissing. "I have come to sea to study theology."

In spite of himself the Captain was touched by this amazing statement. He was a Scot, as we have said. He poured a cup of tea to conceal his astonishment.

"Theology!" he exclaimed. "The theology of hard work is what you will find most of aboard ship. Carry on and do your duty; keep a sharp lookout, all gear shipshape, salute the bridge when going on watch, that is the whole duty of a good officer. That's plenty theology for a seaman." But the skipper's eye turned brightly toward his bookshelves, where he had several volumes of sermons, mostly of a Calvinist sort.

"I am not afraid of work," said Gissing. "But

I'm looking for horizons. In my work ashore I never could find any."

"Your horizon is likely to be peeling potatoes in the galley," remarked the Captain. "I understand they are short-handed there. Or sweeping out bunks in the steerage. Ethics of the dust! What would you say to that?"

"Sir," replied Gissing, "I shall be grateful for any task, however menial, that permits me to meditate. I understand your point of view. By coming aboard your ship I have broken the law, I have committed a crime; but not a sin. Crime and sin, every theologian admits, are not co-extensive."

The Captain sailed head-on into argument.

"What?" he cried. "Are you aware of the doctrine of Moral Inability in a Fallen State? Sit down, sit down, and have a cup of tea. We must discuss this."

He rang for the steward and ordered an extra cup and a fresh supply of toast. At that moment Gissing heard two quick strokes of a bell rung somewhere forward, a clear, musical melancholy tone, echoed promptly in other parts of the ship.

"What is that, Captain?" he asked anxiously. "An accident?"

"Two bells in the first dog-watch," said the Captain. "I fear you are as much a lubber at sea as you are in theology."

The next two hours passed like a flash. Gissing found the skipper, in spite of his occasional moods of austerity, a delicious companion. They discussed Theosophy, Spiritualism, and Christian Science, all of which the Captain, with sturdy but rather troubled vehemence, linked with Primitive Magic. Gissing, seeing that his only hope of establishing himself in the sailor's regard was to disagree and keep the argument going, plunged into psycho-analysis and the philosophy of the unconscious. Rather unwarily he ventured to introduce a nautical illustration into the talk.

"Your compass needle," he said, "points to the North Pole, and although it has never been to the Pole, and cannot even conceive of it, yet it testifies irresistibly to the existence of such a place."

"I trust you navigate your soul more skilfully than you would navigate this vessel," retorted

the Captain. "In the first place, the needle does not point to the North Pole at all, but to the magnetic pole. Furthermore, it has to be adjusted by magnets to counteract deviation. Mr. Gissing, you may be a sincere student of theology, but you have not allowed for your own temperamental deviation. Why, even the gyro compass has to be adjusted for latitude error. You landsmen think that a ship is simply a floating hotel. I should like to have the Bishop you spoke of study a little navigation. That would put into him a healthy respect for the marvels of science. On board ship, sir, the binnacle is kept locked and the key is on the watch-chain of the master. It should be so in all intellectual matters. Confide them to those capable of understanding."

Gissing saw that the Captain greatly relished his sense of superiority, so he made a remark of intentional simplicity.

"The binnacle?" he said. "I thought that was the little shellfish that clings to the bottom of the boat?"

"Don't you dare call my ship a *boat!*" said the Captain. "At sea, a boat means only a lifeboat

or some other small vagabond craft. Come out on the bridge and I'll show you a thing or two."

The evening had closed in hazy, and the *Pomerania* swung steadily in a long plunging roll. At the weather wing of the bridge, gazing sharply over the canvas dodger, was Mr. Pointer, the vigilant Chief Officer, peering off rigidly, as though mesmerized, but saying nothing. He gave the Captain a courteous salute, but kept silence. At the large mahogany wheel, gently steadying it to the quarterly roll of the sea, stood Dane, a tall, solemn quartermaster. In spite of a little uneasiness, due to the unfamiliar motion, Gissing was greatly elated by the wheelhouse, which seemed even more thrillingly romantic than any pulpit. Uncomprehendingly, but with admiration, he examined the binnacle, the engine-room telegraphs, the telephones, the rack of signal-flags, the buttons for closing the bulkheads, and the rotating clear-view screen for lookout in thick weather. Aloft he could see the masthead light, gently soaring in slow arcs.

"I'll show you my particular pride," said the Captain, evidently pleased by his visitor's delighted enthusiasm.

Gissing wondered what ingenious device of science this might be.

Captain Scottie stepped to the weather gunwale of the bridge. He pointed to the smoke, which was rolling rapidly from the funnels.

"You see," he said, "there's quite a strong breeze blowing. But look here."

He lit a match and held it unshielded above the canvas screen which was lashed along the front of the bridge. To Gissing's surprise it burned steadily, without blowing out.

"I've invented a convex wind-shield which splits the air just forward of the bridge. I can stand here and light my pipe in the stiffest gale, without any trouble."

On the decks below Gissing heard a bugle blowing gaily, a bright, persuasive sound.

"Six bells," the Captain said. "I must dress for dinner. Before I start you potato-peeling, I should like to clear up that little discussion of ours about Free Will. One or two things you said interested me."

He paced the bridge for a minute, thinking hard.

"I'll test your sincerity," he said. "To-night

you can bunk in the chart-room. I'll have some dinner sent up to you. I wish you would write me an essay of, say, two thousand words on the subject of Necessity."

For a moment Gissing pondered whether it would not be better to be put in irons and rationed with bread and water. The wind was freshening, and the *Pomerania's* sharp bow slid heavily into broad hills of sea, crashing them into crumbling rollers of suds which fell outward and hissed along her steep sides. The silent Mr. Pointer escorted him into the chart-room, a bare, businesslike place with a large table, a map-cabinet, and a settee. Here, presently, a steward appeared with excellent viands, and a pen, ink, and notepaper. After a cautious meal, Gissing felt more comfortable. There is something about a wet, windy evening at sea that turns the mind naturally toward metaphysics. He pushed away the dishes and began to write.

Later in the evening the Captain reappeared. He looked pleased when he saw a number of sheets already covered with script.

"Rum lot of passengers this trip," he said. "I don't seem to see any who look interesting.

All Big Business and that sort of thing. I must say it's nice to have someone who can talk about books, and so on, once in a while."

Gissing realized that sometimes a shipmaster's life must be a lonely one. The weight of responsibility is always upon him; etiquette prevents his becoming familiar with his officers; small wonder if he pines occasionally for a little congenial talk to relieve his mind.

"Big Business, did you say?" Gissing remarked. "Ah, I could write you quite an essay about that. I used to be General Manager of Beagle and Company."

"Come into my cabin and have a liqueur," said the skipper. "Let the essay go until to-morrow."

The Captain turned on the electric stove in his cabin, for the night was cold. It was a snug sanctum: at the portholes were little chintz curtains; over the bunk was a convenient reading lamp. On the wall a brass pendulum swung slowly, registering the roll of the ship. The ruddy shine of the stove lit up the orderly desk and the photographs of the Captain's family.

"Yours?" said Gissing, looking at a group of three puppies with droll Scottish faces.

"Aye," said the Captain.

"I've three of my own," said Gissing, with a private pang of homesickness. The skipper's cosy quarters were the most truly domestic he had seen since the evening he first fled from responsibility.

Captain Scottie was surprised. Certainly this eccentric stranger in the badly damaged wedding garments had not given the impression of a family head. Just then the steward entered with a decanter of benedictine and small glasses.

"Braw days and bonny!" said the Captain, raising his crystal.

"Secure amidst perils!" replied Gissing courteously. It was the phrase engraved upon the ship's notepaper, on which he had been writing, and it had impressed itself on his mind.

"You said you had been a General Manager."

Gissing told, with some vivacity, of his experiences in the world of trade. The Captain poured another small liqueur.

"They're fine halesome liquor," he said.

"Sincerely yours," said Gissing, nodding over the glass. He was beginning to feel quite at home in the navigating quarters of the ship, and hoped

the potato-peeling might be postponed as long as possible.

"How far had you got in your essay?" asked the Captain.

"Not very far, I fear. I was beginning by laying down a few psychological fundamentals."

"Excellent! Will you read it to me?"

Gissing went to get his manuscript, and read it aloud. The Captain listened attentively, puffing clouds of smoke.

"I am sorry this is such a short voyage," he said when Gissing finished. "You have approached the matter from an entirely naïf and instinctive standpoint, and it will take some time to show you your errors. Before I demolish your arguments I should like to turn them over in my mind. I will reduce my ideas to writing and then read them to you."

"I should like nothing better," said Gissing. "And I can think over the subject more carefully while I peel the potatoes."

"Nonsense," said the Captain. "I do not often get a chance to discuss theology. I will tell you my idea. You spoke of your experience as General Manager, when you had charge of a thousand

employees. One of the things we need on this ship is a staff-captain, to take over the management of the personnel. That would permit me to concentrate entirely on navigation. In a vessel of this size it is wrong that the master should have to carry the entire responsibility."

He rang for the steward.

"My compliments to Mr. Pointer, and tell him to come here."

Mr. Pointer appeared shortly in oilskins, saluted, and gazed fixedly at his superior, with one foot raised upon the brass door-sill.

"Mr. Pointer," said Captain Scottie, "I have appointed Captain Gissing staff-captain. Take orders from him as you would from me. He will have complete charge of the ship's discipline."

"Aye, aye, sir," said Mr. Pointer, stood a moment intently to see if there were further orders, saluted again, and withdrew.

"Now you had better turn in," said the skipper. "Of course you must wear uniform. I'll send the tailor up to you at once. He can remodel one of my suits overnight. The trousers will have to be lengthened."

On the chart-room sofa, Gissing dozed and

waked and dozed again. On the bridge near by he heard the steady tread of feet, the mysterious words of the officer on watch passing the course to his relief. Bells rang with sharp double clang. Through the open port he could hear the alternate boom and hiss of the sea under the bows. With the stately lift and lean of the ship there mingled a faint driving vibration.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

THE first morning in any new environment is always the most exciting. Gissing was already awake, and watching the novel sight of a patch of sunshine sliding to and fro on the deck of the chart-room, when there was a gentle tap at the door. The Captain's steward entered, carrying a handsome uniform.

"Six bells, sir," he said. "Your bath is laid on."

Gissing was not very sure just what time it was, but the steward held out a dressing gown for him to slip on, so he took the hint, and followed him to the Captain's private bathroom where he plunged gaily into warm salt water. He was hardly dressed before breakfast was laid for him in the chart-room. It was a breakfast greatly to his liking—porridge, scrambled eggs, grilled kidneys and bacon, coffee, toast, and marmalade.

Evidently the hardships of sea life had been greatly exaggerated by fiction writers.

He was a trifle bashful about appearing on the bridge in his blue and brass formality, and waited a while thinking Captain Scottie might come. But no one disturbed him, so by and bye he went out. It was a brisk morning with a fresh breeze and plenty of whitecaps. Dancing rainbows hovered about the bow when an occasional explosion of spray burst up into sunlight. Mr. Pointer was on the bridge, still gazing steadily into the distance. He saluted Gissing, but said nothing. The quartermaster at the wheel also saluted in silence. A seaman wiping down the paintwork on the deckhouse saluted. Gissing returned these gestures punctiliously, and began to pace the bridge from side to side. He soon grew accustomed to the varying slant of the deck, and felt that his footing showed a nautical assurance.

Now for the first time he enjoyed an untrammelled horizon on all sides. The sea, he observed, was not really blue—not at any rate the blue he had supposed. Where it seethed flatly along the hull, laced with swirls of milky foam, it was almost black. Farther away, it was green, or darkly

violet. A ladder led to the top of the charthouse, and from this commanding height the whole body of the ship lay below him. How alive she seemed, how full of personality! The strong funnels, the tall masts that moved so delicately against the pale open sky, the distant stern that now dipped low in a comfortable hollow, and now soared and threshed onward with a swimming thrust, the whole vital organism spoke to the eye and the imagination. In the centre of this vast circle she moved, royal and serene. She was more beautiful than the element she rode on, for perhaps there was something meaningless in that pure vacant round of sea and sky. Once its immense azure was grasped and noted, it brought nothing to the mind. Reason was indignant to conceive it, sloping endlessly away.

The placid, beautifully planned routine of shipboard passed on its accustomed course, and he began to suspect that his staff-captaincy was a sinecure. Down below he could see the passengers briskly promenading, or drowsing under their rugs. On the hurricane deck, aft, a sailor was chalking a shuffleboard court. It occurred to him that all this might become monotonous un-

less he found some actual part in it. Just then Captain Scottie appeared on the bridge, took a quick look round, and joined him on top of the charthouse.

"Good morning!" he said. "You won't think me rude if you don't see much of me? Thinking about those ideas of yours, I have come upon some rather puzzling stuff. I must work the whole thing out more clearly. Your suggestion that Conscience points the way to an integration of personality into a higher type of divinity, seems to me off the track; but I haven't quite downed it yet. I'm going to shut myself up to-day and consider the matter. I leave you in charge."

"I shall be perfectly happy," said Gissing. "Please don't worry about me."

"You suggest that all the conditions of life at sea, our mastery of the forces of Nature, and so on, seem to show that we have perfect freedom of will, and adapt everything to our desires. I believe just the contrary. The forces of Nature compel us to approach them in their own way, otherwise we are shipwrecked. It is in the conditions of Nature that this ship should reach

port in eight days, otherwise we should get nowhere. We do it because it is our destiny."

"I am not so sure of that," said Gissing. But the Captain had already departed with a clouded brow.

On the chart-room roof Gissing had discovered an alluring instrument, the exact use of which he did not know. It seemed to be some kind of steering control. The dial was lettered, from left to right, as follows:—HARD A PORT, PORT, STEADY, COURSE, STEADY, STARB^{D}, HARD A STARB^{D}. At present the handle stood upon the section marked COURSE. After a careful study of the whole seascape, it seemed to Gissing that off to the south the ocean looked more blue and more interesting. After some hesitation he moved the handle to the PORT mark, and waited to see what would happen. To his delight he saw the bow swing slowly round, and the *Pomerania's* gleaming wake spread behind her in a whitened curve. He descended to the bridge, a little nervous as to what Mr. Pointer might say, but he found the Mate gazing across the water with the same fierce and unwearying attention.

"I have changed the course," he said.

Mr. Pointer saluted, but said nothing.

Having succeeded so far, Gissing ventured upon another innovation. He had been greatly tempted by the wheel, and envied the stolid quartermaster who was steering. So, assuming an air of calm certainty, he entered the wheelhouse.

"I'll take her for a while," he said.

"Aye, aye, sir," said the quartermaster, and surrendered the wheel to him.

"You might string out a few flags," Gissing said. He had been noticing the bright signal buntings in the rack, and thought it a pity not to use them.

"I like to see a ship well dressed," he added.

"Aye, aye, sir," said Dane. "Any choice, sir?"

Gissing picked out a string of flags which were particularly lively in colour-scheme, and had them hoisted. Then he gave his attention to the wheel. He found it quite an art, and was surprised to learn that a big ship requires so much helm. But it was very pleasant. He took care to steer toward patches of sea that looked interesting, and to cut into any particular waves that took his fancy. After an hour or so, he

sighted a fishing schooner, and gave chase. He found it so much fun to run close beside her (taking care to pass to leeward, so as not to cut off her wind) that a mile farther on he turned and steered a neat circle about the bewildered craft. The *Pomerania's* passengers were greatly interested, and lined the rails trying to make out what the fishermen were shouting. The captain of the schooner seemed particularly agitated, kept waving at the signal flags and barking through a megaphone. During these manœuvres Mr. Pointer gazed so hard at the horizon that Gissing felt a bit embarrassed.

"I thought it wise to find out exactly what our turning-circle is," he said.

Mr. Pointer saluted. He was a well-trained officer.

Late in the afternoon the Captain reappeared, looking more cheerful. Gissing was still at the helm, which he found so fascinating he would not relinquish it. He had ordered his tea served on a little stand beside the wheel so that he could drink it while he steered.

"Hullo!" said the Captain. "I see you've changed the course."

"It seemed best to do so," said Gissing firmly. He felt that to show any weakness at this point would be fatal.

"Oh, well, probably it doesn't matter. I'm coming round to some of your ideas."

Gissing saw that this would never do. Unless he could keep the master disturbed by philosophic doubts, Scottie would expect to resume command of the ship.

"Well," he said, "I've been thinking about it, too. I believe I went a bit too far. But what do you think about this? Do you believe that Conscience is inherited or acquired? You see how important that is. If Conscience is a kind of automatic oracle, infallible and perfect, what becomes of free will? And if, on the other hand, Conscience is only a laboriously trained perception of moral and social utilities, where does your deity come in?"

Gissing was aware that this dilemma would not hold water very long, and was painfully impromptu; but it hit the Captain amidships.

"By Jove," he said, "that's terrible, isn't it? It's no use trying to carry on until I've got that under the hatch. Look here, would you mind,

just as a favour, keep things going while I wrestle with that question?—I know it's asking a lot, but perhaps——"

"It's quite all right," Gissing replied. "Naturally you want to work these things out."

The Captain started to leave the bridge, but by old seafaring habit he cast a keen glance at the sky. He saw the bright string of code flags fluttering. He seemed startled.

"Are you signalling any one?" he asked.

"No one in particular. I thought it looked better to have a few flags about."

"I daresay you're right. But better take them down if you speak a ship. They're rather confusing."

"Confusing? I thought they were just to brighten things up."

"You have two different signals up. They read, *Bubonic plague, give me a wide berth. Am coming to your assistance.*"

Toward dinner time, when Gissing had left the wheel and was humming a tune as he walked the bridge, the steward came to him.

"The Captain's compliments, sir, and would you take his place in the saloon to-night? He

says he's very busy writing, sir, and would take it as a favour."

Gissing was always obliging. There was just a hint of conscious sternness in his manner as he entered the *Pomerania's* beautiful dining saloon, for he wished the passengers to realize that their lives depended upon his prudence and sea-lore. Twice during the meal he instructed the steward to bring him the latest barometer reading; and after the dessert he scribbled a note on the back of a menu-card and had it sent to the Chief Engineer. It said:—

Dear Chief: Please keep up a good head of steam to-night. I am expecting dirty weather.

MR. GISSING,
(Staff-Captain)

What the Chief said when he received the message is not included in the story.

But the same social aplomb that had made Gissing successful as a floorwalker now came to his rescue as mariner. The passengers at the Captain's table were amazed at his genial charm. His anecdotes of sea life were heartily applauded. After dinner he circulated gracefully

in the ladies' lounge, and took coffee there surrounded by a chattering bevy. He organized a little impromptu concert in the music room, and when that was well started, slipped away to the smoke-room. Here he found a pool being organized as to the exact day and hour when the *Pomerania* would reach port. Appealed to for his opinion, he advised caution. On all sides he was in demand, for dancing, for bridge, for a recitation. At length he slipped away, pleading that he must keep himself fit in case of fog. The passengers were loud in his praise, asserting that they had never met so agreeable a sea-captain. One elderly lady said she remembered crossing with him in the old *Caninia*, years ago, and that he was just the same then.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

AND SO the voyage went on. Gissing was quite content to do a two-hour trick at the wheel both morning and afternoon, and worked out some new principles of steering which gave him pleasure. In the first place, he noticed that the shuffle-board and quoit players, on the boat deck aft, were occasionally annoyed by cinders from the stacks, so he made it a general plan to steer so that the smoke blew at right angles to the ship's course. As the wind was prevailingly west, this meant that his general trend was southerly. Whenever he saw another vessel, a mass of floating sea-weed, a porpoise, or even a sea-gull, he steered directly for it, and passed as close as possible, to have a good look at it. Even Mr. Pointer admitted (in the mates' mess) that he had never experienced so eventful a voyage. To keep the quartermasters from being idle, Gissing had them knit him a rope ham-

mock to be slung in the chart-room. He felt that this would be more nautical than a plush settee.

There was a marvellous sense of power in standing at the wheel and feeling the great hull reply to his touch. Occasionally Captain Scottie would emerge from his cabin, look round with a faint surprise, and come to the bridge to see what was happening. Mr. Pointer would salute mutely, and continue to study the skyline with indignant absorption. The Captain would approach the wheel, where Gissing was deep in thought. Rubbing his hands, the Captain would say heartily, "Well, I think I've got it all clear now."

Gissing sighed.

"What is it?" the Captain inquired anxiously.

"I'm bothered about the subconscious. They tell us nowadays that it's the subconscious mind that is really important. The more mental operations we can turn over to the subconscious realm, the happier we will be, and the more efficient. Morality, theology, and everything really worth while, as I understand it, spring from the subconscious."

The Captain's look of cheer would vanish.

"Maybe there's something in that."

"If so," Gissing continued, "then perhaps consciousness is entirely spurious. It seems to me that before we can get anywhere at all, we've got to draw the line between the conscious and the subconscious. What bothers me is, am I conscious of having a subconscious, or not? Sometimes I think I am, and then again I'm doubtful. But if I'm aware of my subconscious, then it isn't a genuine subconscious, and the whole thing's just another delusion——"

The Captain would knit his weather-beaten brow and again retire anxiously to his quarters, after begging Gissing to be generous and carry on a while longer. Occasionally, pacing the starboard bridge-deck, sacred to captains, Gissing would glance through the port and see the metaphysical commander bent over sheets of foolscap and thickly wreathed in pipe-smoke.

He himself had fallen into a kind of tranced felicity, in which these questions no longer had other than an ingenious interest. His heart was drowned in the engulfing blue. As they made their southing, wind and weather seemed to fall

astern, the sun poured with a more golden candour. He stood at the wheel in a tranquil reverie, blithely steering toward some bright belly of cloud that had caught his fancy. Mr. Pointer shook his head when he glanced surreptitiously at the steering recorder, a device that noted graphically every movement of the rudder with a view to promoting economical helmsmanship. Indeed Gissing's course, as logged on the chart, surprised even himself, so that he forbade the officers taking their noon observations. When Mr. Pointer said something about isobars, the staff-captain replied serenely that he did not expect to find any polar bears in these latitudes.

He had hoped privately for an occasional pirate, and scanned the sea-rim sharply for suspicious topsails. But the ocean, as he remarked, is not crowded. They proceeded, day after day, in a solitary wideness of unblemished colour. The ship, travelling always in the centre of this infinite disk, seemed strangely identified with his own itinerant spirit, watchful at the gist of things, alert at the point which was necessarily, for him, the nub of all existence. He wandered about the *Pomerania's* sagely ordered passages

and found her more and more magical. She went on and on, with some strange urgent vitality of her own. Through the fiddleys on the boat deck came a hot oily breath and the steady drumming of her burning heart. From oxter to hawse-hole, from shaft-tunnel to crow's-nest, he explored and loved her. In the whole of her proud, faithful, obedient fabric he divined honour and exultation. Poised upon uncertainty, she was sure. The camber of her white-scrubbed decks, the long, clean sheer of her hull, the concave flare of her bows—what was the amazing joy and rightness of these things? And yet the grotesque passengers regarded her only as a vehicle, to carry them sedatively to some clamouring dock. Fools! She was more lovely than anything they would ever see again! He yearned to drive her endlessly toward that unreachable perimeter of sky.

On land there had been definite horizons, even if disappointing when reached and examined; but here there was no horizon at all. Every hour it slid and slid over the dark orb of sea. He lost count of time. The tremulous cradling of the *Pomerania*, steadily climbing the long leagues; her noble forecastle solemnly lifting against

heaven, then descending with grave beauty into a spread of foaming beryl and snowdrift, seemed one with the rhythm of his pulse and heart. Perhaps there had been more than mere ingenuity in his last riddle for the theological skipper. Truly the subconscious had usurped him. Here he was almost happy, for he was almost unaware of life. It was all blue vacancy and suspension. The sea is the great answer and consoler, for it means either nothing or everything, and so need not tease the brain.

But the passengers, though unobservant, began to murmur; especially those who had wagered that the *Pomerania* would dock on the eighth day. The world itself, they complained, was created in seven days, and why should so fine a ship take longer to cross a comparatively small ocean? Urbanely, over coffee and *petits fours*, Gissing argued with them. They were well on their way, he protested; and then, as a hypothetical case, he asked why one destination was more worth visiting than another? He even quoted Shakespeare on this point—something about "ports and happy havens"—and succeeded in turning the tide of conversation for a while. The mention of

Shakespeare suggested to some of the ladies that it would be pleasant, now they all knew each other so well, to put on some amateur theatricals. They compromised by playing charades in the saloon. Another evening Gissing kept them amused by fireworks, which were very lovely against the dark sky. For this purpose he used the emergency rockets, star-shells and coloured flares, much to the distress of Dane, the quartermaster, who had charge of these supplies.

Little by little, however, the querulous protests of the passengers began to weary him. Also, he had been receiving terse memoranda from the Chief Engineer that the coal was getting low in the bunkers and that something must be queer in the navigating department. This seemed very unreasonable. The fixed gaze of Mr. Pointer, perpetually examining the horizon as though he wanted to make sure he would recognize it if they met again, was trying. Even Captain Scottie complained one day that the supply of fresh meat had given out and that the steward had been bringing him tinned beef. Gissing determined upon resolute measures.

He had notice served that on account of possi-

ble danger from pirates there would be a general boat drill on the following day—not merely for the crew, but for everyone. He gave a little talk about it in the saloon after dinner, and worked his audience up to quite a pitch of enthusiasm. This would be better than any amateur theatricals, he insisted. Everyone was to act exactly as though in a sudden calamity. They might make up the boat-parties on the basis of congeniality if they wished; five minutes would be given for reaching the stations, without panic or disorder. They should prepare themselves as though they were actually going to leave a sinking ship.

The passengers were delighted with the idea of this novel entertainment. Every soul on board—with the exception of Captain Scottie, who had locked himself in and refused to be disturbed—was properly advertised of the event.

The following day, fortunately, was clear and calm. At noon Gissing blew the syren, fired a rocket from the bridge, and swung the engine telegraph to STOP. The ship's orchestra, by his orders, struck up a rollicking air. Quickly and without confusion, amid cries of *Women and children first!* the passengers filed to their allot

ted places. The crew and officers were all at their stations.

Gissing knocked at Captain Scottie's cabin.

"We are taking to the boats," he said.

"Goad!" cried the skipper. "Wull it be a colleesion?"

"All's clear and the davits are outboard," said Gissing. He had been studying the manual of boat handling in one of the nautical volumes in the chart-room.

"Auld Hornie!" ejaculated the skipper. "We'll no can salve the specie! Make note of her poseetion, Mr. Gissing!" He hastened to gather his papers, the log, a chronometer, and a large canister of tobacco.

"The Deil's intil't," he said as he hastened to his boat. "I had yon pragmateesm of yours on a lee shore. Two-three hours, I'd have careened ye."

Gissing was ready with his megaphone. From the wing of the bridge he gave the orders.

"Lower away!" and the boats dropped to the passenger rail.

"Avast lowering!" Each boat took in her roster of passengers, who were in high spirits at this unusual excitement.

"Mind your painters! Lower handsomely!"

The boats took the water in orderly fashion, and were cast off. Remaining members of the crew swarmed down the falls. The bandsmen had a boat to themselves, and resumed their tune as soon as they were settled.

Gissing, left alone on the ship, waved for silence.

"Look sharp, man!" cried Captain Scottie. "Honour's satisfied! Take your place in the boat!"

The passengers applauded, and there was quite a clatter of camera shutters as they snapped the *Pomerania* looming grandly above them.

"Boats are all provisioned and equipped," shouted Gissing. "I've broadcasted your position by radio. The barometer's at Fixed Fair. Pull off now, and 'ware the screw."

He moved the telegraph handle to DEAD SLOW, and the *Pomerania* began to slip forward gently. The boats dropped aft amid a loud miscellaneous outcry. Mr. Pointer was already examining the horizon. Captain Scottie, awakened to the situation, was uttering the language of theology but not the purport.

"Don't stand up in the boats," megaphoned Gissing. "You're quite all right, there's a ship on the way already. I wirelessed last night."

He slid the telegraph to SLOW, HALF, and then FULL. Once more the ship creamed through the lifting purple swells. The little flock of boats was soon out of sight.

Alone at the wheel, he realized that a great weight was off his mind. The responsibility of his position had burdened him more than he knew. Now a strange eagerness and joy possessed him. His bubbling wake cut straight and milky across the glittering afternoon. In a ruddy sunset glow, the sea darkened through all tints of violet, amethyst, indigo. The horizon line sharpened so clearly that he could distinguish the tossing profile of waves wetting the sky. "A red sky at night is the sailor's delight," he said to himself. He switched on the port and starboard lights and the masthead lanterns, then lashed the wheel while he went below for supper. He did not know exactly where he was, for he seemed to have steamed clean off the chart; but as he conned the helm that evening, and leaned over the lighted binnacle, he had a feeling that he was not far

from some destiny. With cheerful assurance he lashed the wheel again, and turned in. He woke once in the night, and leaped from the hammock with a start. He thought he had heard a sound of barking.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

THE next morning he sighted land. Coming out on the bridge, the whole face of things was changed. The sea-colour had lightened to a tawny green; gulls dipped and hovered; away on the horizon lay a soft blue contour. "Land Ho!" he shouted superbly, and wondered what new country he had discovered. He ran up a hoist of red and yellow signal flags, and steered gaily toward the shore.

It had grown suddenly cold: he had to fetch Captain Scottie's pea-jacket to wear at the wheel. On the long spilling crests, that crumbled and spread running layers of froth in their hurry shoreward, the *Pomerania* rode home. She knew her landfall and seemed to quicken. Steadily swinging on the jade-green surges, she buried her nose almost to the hawse-pipes, then lifted until her streaming forefoot gleamed out of a frilled ruffle of foam.

Gissing, too, was eager. A tingling buoyancy and impatience took hold of him: he fidgeted with sheer eagerness for life. Land, the beloved stability of our dear and only earth, drew and charmed him. Behind was the senseless, heartbreaking sea. Now he could discern hills rising in a gilded opaline light. In the volatile thin air was a quick sense of strangeness. A new world was close about him: a world that he could see, and feel, and inhale, and yet knew nothing of.

Suddenly a great humility possessed him. He had been froward and silly and vain. He had shouted arrogantly at Beauty, like a noisy tourist in a canyon; and the only answer, after long waiting, had been the paltry diminished echo of his own voice. He thought shamefully of his follies. What matter how you name God or in what words you praise Him? In this new foreign land he would quietly accept things as he found them. The laughter of God was too strange to understand.

No, there was no answer. He was doubly damned, for he had made truth a mere sport of intellectual riddling. The mind, like a spinning flywheel of fatigued steel, was gradually racked

to bursting by the conflict of stresses. And yet: every equilibrium was an opposure of forces. Rotation, if swift enough, creates amazing stability: he had seen how the gyroscope can balance at apparently impossible angles. Perhaps it was so of the mind. If it twirls at high speed it can lean right out over the abyss without collapse. But the stationary mind—he thought of Bishop Borzoi—must keep away from the edge. Try to force it to the edge, it raves in panic. Every mind, very likely, knows its own frailties, and does well to safeguard them. At any rate, that was the most generous interpretation. Most minds undoubtedly, were uneasy in high places. They doubted their ability to refrain from jumping off. How many bones of fine intellects lay whitening at the foot of the theological cliff——

It seemed to be a lonely coast, and wintry. Patches of snow lay upon the hills, the woods were bare and brown. A bottle-necked harbour opened out before him. He reduced the engines to Dead Slow and glided gaily through the strait. He had been anxious lest his navigation might not be equal to the occasion: he did not want to disgrace himself at this final test. But all seemed to

arrange itself with enchanted ease. A steep ledge of ground offered a natural pier, with tree-stumps for bollards. He let her come gently beyond the spot; reversed the propellers just at the right time, and backed neatly alongside. He moved the telegraph handle to FINISHED WITH ENGINES; ran out the gangplank smartly, and stepped ashore. He moored the vessel fore and aft, and hung out fenders to prevent chafing.

The first thing to do, he said to himself, is to get the lie of the land, and find out whether it is inhabited.

A hillside rising above the water promised a clear view. The stubble grass was dry and frosty, after the warm days at sea the chill was nipping; but what an elixir of air! If this is a desert island, he thought, it will be a glorious discovery. His heart was jocund with anticipation. A curious foreign look in the landscape, he thought: quite unlike anything——

Suddenly, where the hill arched against pearly sky, he saw a narrow thread of smoke rising. He halted in alarm. Who might this be, friend or foe? But eager agitation pushed him on. Burning to know, he hurried up to the brow of the hill.

The smoke mounted from a small bonfire of sticks in a sheltered thicket, where a miraculous being—who was, as a matter of fact, a rather ragged and dingy vagabond—was cooking a tin of stew over the blaze.

Gissing stood, quivering with emotion. Joy such as he had never known darted through all the cords of his body. He ran, shouting, in mirth and terror. In fear, in a passion of love and knowledge and understanding, he abased himself and yearned before this marvel. Impossible to have conceived, yet, once seen, utterly satisfying and the fulfilment of all needs. He laughed and leaped and worshipped. When the first transport was over, he laid his head against this being's knee, he nestled there and was content. This was the inscrutable perfect answer.

"Cripes!" said the puzzled tramp, as he caressed the nuzzling head. "The purp's loco. Maybe he's been lost. You might think he'd never seen a man before."

He was right.

And Gissing sat quietly, his throat resting upon the soiled knee of a very old and spicy trouser.

"I have found God," he said.

Presently he thought of the ship. It would not do to leave her so insecurely moored. Reluctantly, with many a backward glance and a heart full of glory, he left the Presence. He ran to the edge of the hill to look down upon the harbour.

The outlook was puzzlingly altered. He gazed in astonishment. What were those poplars, rising naked into the bright air?—there was something familiar about them. And that little house beyond . . . he stared bewildered.

The great shining breadth of the ocean had shrunk to the roundness of a tiny pond. And the *Pomerania?* He leaned over, shaken with questions. There, beside the bank, was a little plank of wood, a child's plaything, roughly fashioned shipshape: two chips for funnels; red and yellow frosted leaves for flags; a withered dogwood blossom for propeller. He leaned closer, with whirling mind. In the clear cool surface of the pond he could see the sky mirrored, deeper than any ocean, pellucid, infinite, blue.

He ran up the path to the house. The scuffled ragged garden lay naked and hard. At the windows, he saw with surprise, were holly wreaths

tied with broad red ribbon. On the porch, some battered toys. He opened the door.

A fluttering rosy light filled the room. By the fireplace the puppies—how big they were!—were sitting with Mrs. Spaniel. Joyous uproar greeted him: they flung themselves upon him. Shouts of "Daddy! Daddy!" filled the house, while the young Spaniels stood by more bashfully.

Good Mrs. Spaniel was gratefully moved. Her moist eyes shone brightly in the firelight.

"I knew you'd be home for Christmas, Mr. Gissing," she said. "I've been telling them so all afternoon. Now, children, be still a moment and let me speak. I've been telling you your Daddy would be home in time for a Christmas Eve story. I've got to go and fix that plum pudding."

In her excitement a clear bubble dripped from the tip of her tongue. She caught it in her apron, and hurried to the kitchen.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

THE children insisted on leading him all through the house to show how nicely they had taken care of things. And in every room Gissing saw the marks of riot and wreckage. There were tooth-scars on all furniture-legs; the fringes of rugs were chewed off; there were prints of mud, ink, paints, and whatnot, on curtains and wallpapers and coverlets. Poor Mrs. Spaniel kept running anxiously from the kitchen to renew apologies.

"I *did* try to keep 'em in order," she said, "but they seem to bash things when you're not looking."

But Gissing was too happy to stew about such trifles. When the inspection was over, they all sat down by the chimney and he piled on more logs.

"Well, chilluns," he said, "what do you want Santa Claus to bring you for Christmas?"

"An aunbile!"	exclaimed	Groups
"An elphunt!"		Bunks
"A little train with hammers!"		Yelpers

"A little train with hammers?" asked Gissing. "What does he mean?"

"Oh," said Groups and Bunks, with condescending pity, "he means a typewriter. He calls it a little train because it moves on a track when you hit it."

A painful apprehension seized him, and he went hastily to his study. He had not noticed the typewriter, which Mrs. Spaniel had—too late—put out of reach. Half the keys were sticking upright, jammed together and tangled in a whirl of ribbon; the carriage was strangely dislocated. And yet even this mischance, which would once have horrified him, left him unperturbed. It's my own fault, he thought: I shouldn't have left it where they could play with it. Perhaps God thinks the same when His creatures make a mess of the dangerous laws of life.

"A Christmas story!" the children were clamouring.

Can it really be Christmas Eve? Gissing

thought. Christmas seems to have come very suddenly this year, I haven't really adjusted my mind to it yet.

"All right," he said. "Now sit still and keep quiet. Bunks, give Yelpers a little more room. If there's any bickering Santa Claus might hear it."

He sat in the big chair by the fire, and the three looked upward expectantly from the hearthrug.

"Once upon a time there were three little puppies, who lived in a house in the country in the Canine Estates. And their names were Groups, Bunks, and Yelpers."

The three tails thumped in turn as the names were mentioned, but the children were too excitedly absorbed to interrupt.

"And one year, just before Christmas, they heard a dreadful rumour."

"What's a rumour?" cried Yelpers, alarmed.

This was rather difficult to explain, so Gissing did not attempt it. He began again.

"They heard that Santa Claus might not be able to come because he was so behind with his housework. You see, Santa Claus is a great big Newfoundland dog with a white beard, and he

lives in a frosty kennel at the North Pole, all shining with icicles round the roof and windows. But it's so far away from everywhere that poor Santa couldn't get a servant. All the maids who went there refused to stay because it was so cold and lonely, and so far from the movies. Santa Claus was busy in his workshop, making toys; he was busy taking care of the reindeer in their snow-stables; and he didn't have time to wash his dishes. So all summer he just let them pile up and pile up in the kitchen. And when Christmas came near, there was his lovely house in a dreadful state of untidiness. He couldn't go away and leave it like that. And so, if he didn't get his dishes washed and the house cleaned up for Christmas, all the puppies all over the world would have to go without toys. When Groups and Bunks and Yelpers heard this, they were very much worried."

"How did they hear it?" asked Bunks, who was the analytical member of the trio.

"A very sensible question," said Gissing, approvingly. "They heard it from the chipmunk who lives in the wood behind the house. The chipmunk heard it underground."

"In his chipmonastery?" cried Groups. It was a family joke to call the chipmunk's burrow by that name, and though the puppies did not understand the pun they relished the long word.

"Yes," continued Gissing. "The reindeer in Santa Claus's stable were so unhappy about the dishes not being washed, and the chance of missing their Christmas frolic, that they broadcasted a radio message. Their horns are very fine for sending radio; and the chipmunk, sitting at his little wireless outfit, with the receivers over his ears, heard it. And Chippy told Groups and Bunks and Yelpers.

"So these puppies decided to help Santa Claus. They didn't know exactly where to find him, but the chipmunk told them the direction, and off they went. They travelled and travelled, and when they came to the ocean they begged a ride from the seagulls, and each one sat on a seagull's back just as though he was on a little airplane. They flew and flew, and at last they came to Santa Claus's house. Through the stable-walls, which were made of clear ice, they could see the reindeer stamping in their stalls. In the big workshop, where Santa Claus was busy making

toys, they could hear a lively sound of hammering. The big red sleigh was standing outside the stables, all ready to be hitched up to the reindeer.

"They slipped into Santa Claus's house quickly and quietly, so no one would see or hear them. The house was in a terrible state, but they set to work to clean up. Groups found the vacuum cleaner and sucked up all the crumbs from the dining-room rug. Bunks ran upstairs and made Santa Claus's bed for him and swept the floors and put clean towels in the bathroom. And Yelpers hurried into the kitchen and washed the dishes, and scrubbed the pots, and polished the egg-stains off the silver spoons, and emptied the ice-box pan. All working hard, they got through very soon, and made Santa Claus's house as clean as any house could be. They fixed the window-shades so that they would all hang level, not just anyhow, as poor Santa had them. Then, when everything was spick and span, they ran outdoors again and beckoned the seagulls. They climbed on the gulls' backs, and away they flew homeward."

"Was Santa Claus pleased?" asked Bunks.

"Indeed he was, when he came back from his

workshop, very tired after making toys all day——"

"What kind of toys did he make?" exclaimed Yelpers anxiously. "Did he make a typewriter?"

"He made every kind of toy. And when he saw how his house had been cleaned up, he thought the fairies must have done it. He lit his pipe, and filled a thermos bottle with hot cocoa to keep him warm on his long journey. Then he put on his red coat, and his long boots, and his fur cap, and went out to harness the reindeer. That very night he drove off with his sleigh packed full of toys for all the puppies in the world. In fact, he was so pleased that he loaded his big bag with more toys than he had ever carried before. And that was how a queer thing happened."

They waited in eager suspense.

"You know, Santa Claus always drives into the Canine Estates by the little back road through the woods, where the chipmunk lives. You know the gateway, at the bend in the lane: well, it's rather narrow, and Santa Claus's sleigh is very wide. And this time, because his bag had so many toys in it, the bag bulged over the edge of the sleigh, and one corner of the bag caught on

the gatepost as he drove by. Three toys fell out, and what do you suppose they were?"

"An aunbile!"

"An elphunt!"

"A typewriter!"

"Yes, that's quite right. And it happened that the chipmunk was out that night, digging up some nuts for his Christmas dinner, a little sad because he had no presents to give his children; and he found the three toys. He took them home to the little chipmunks, and they were tremendously pleased. That was only fair, because if it hadn't been for the chipmunk and his radio set, *no one* would have had any toys that Christmas."

"Did Santa Claus have any more typewriters in his bag?" asked Yelpers gravely.

"Oh, yes, he had plenty more of everything. And when he got to the house where Groups and Bunks and Yelpers lived, he slid down the chimney and took a look round. He didn't see any crumbs on the floor, or any toys lying about not put away, so he filled the stockings with all kinds of lovely things, and an aunbile and an elphunt and a typewriter."

"What did the puppies say?" they inquired.

"They were sound asleep upstairs, and didn't know anything about it until Christmas morning. Come on now, it's time for bed."

"We can undress ourselves now," said Groups.

"Will you tuck me in?" said Bunks.

"You're sure he had another typewriter in his bag?" said Yelpers.

They scrambled upstairs.

Later, when the house was quiet, Gissing went out to the kitchen to see Mrs. Spaniel. She was diligently rolling pastry, and her nose was white with flour.

"Oh, sir, I'm glad you got home in time for Christmas," she said. "The children were counting on it. Did you have a successful trip, sir?"

"Every trip is successful when you get home again," said Gissing. "I suppose the shops will be open late to-night, won't they? I'm going to run down to the village to get some toys."

Before leaving the house, he went down to the cellar to see if the furnace was all right. He was amazed to see how naturally and cheerfully he had slipped back into the old sense of responsibility. Where was the illusory freedom he had dreamed of? Even the epiphany on the hilltop

now seemed a distant miracle. That fearful happiness might never come again. And yet here, among the familiar difficult minutiæ of home, what a lightness he felt. A great phrase from the prayer-book came to his mind—"Whose service is perfect freedom."

Ah, he said to himself, it is all very well to wear a crown of thorns, and indeed every sensitive creature carries one in secret. But there are times when it ought to be worn cocked over one ear.

He opened the furnace door. A bright glow filled the fire-box: he could hear a stir and singing in the boiler, and the rustle of warm pipes that chuckled quietly through winter nights of storm. Over the coals hovered a magic evasive flicker, the very soul of fire. It was a pentecostal flame, perfect and heavenly in tint, the essence of pure colour, a clear immortal blue.

YOUTH

A NOVELETTE BY

Joseph Conrad

FROM

"YOUTH"

On the evening of the day his eldest son was born, in a two-penny notebook, in pencil, by the light of a solitary candle, Joseph Conrad started YOUTH. This story of Marlow's first trip to the East, and his first command, shipwrecked alone in an open boat, is a recapturing of a moment of the eternal intoxication, strength, and glamour of youth. It is one of the world's great works of the imagination.

YOUTH

THIS could have occurred nowhere but in England, where men and sea interpenetrate, so to speak—the sea entering into the life of most men, and the men knowing something or everything about the sea, in the way of amusement, of travel, or of bread-winning.

We were sitting round a mahogany table that reflected the bottle, the claret-glasses, and our faces as we leaned on our elbows. There was a director of companies, an accountant, a lawyer, Marlow, and myself. The director had been a *Conway* boy, the accountant had served four years at sea, the lawyer—a fine crusted Tory, High Churchman, the best of old fellows, the soul of honour—had been chief officer in the P. & O. service in the good old days when mail-boats were square-rigged at least on two masts, and used to come down the China Sea before a fair monsoon with stun'-sails set alow and aloft. We all began life in the merchant service. Between the five of us there was the strong bond of the sea, and also the fellowship of the craft, which no amount of enthusiasm for yachting, cruising, and so on can give, since one is only the amusement of life and the other is life itself.

Marlow (at least I think that is how he spelt his name) told the story, or rather the chronicle, of a voyage:—

"Yes, I have seen a little of the Eastern seas; but what I remember best is my first voyage there. You fellows know there are those voyages that seem ordered

for the illustration of life, that might stand for a symbol of existence. You fight, work, sweat, nearly kill yourself, sometimes do kill yourself, trying to accomplish something—and you can't. Not from any fault of yours. You simply can do nothing, neither great nor little—not a thing in the world—not even marry an old maid, or get a wretched 600-ton cargo of coal to its port of destination.

"It was altogether a memorable affair. It was my first voyage to the East, and my first voyage as second mate; it was also my skipper's first command. You'll admit it was time. He was sixty if a day; a little man, with a broad, not very straight back, with bowed shoulders and one leg more bandy than the other, he had that queer twisted-about appearance you see so often in men who work in the fields. He had a nut-cracker face—chin and nose trying to come together over a sunken mouth—and it was framed in iron-gray fluffy hair, that looked like a chin-strap of cotton-wool sprinkled with coal-dust. And he had blue eyes in that old face of his, which were amazingly like a boy's, with that candid expression some quite common men preserve to the end of their days by a rare internal gift of simplicity of heart and rectitude of soul. What induced him to accept me was a wonder. I had come out of a crack Australian clipper, where I had been third officer, and he seemed to have a prejudice against crack clippers as aristocratic and high-toned. He said to me, 'You know, in this ship you will have to work.' I said I had to work in every ship I had ever been in. 'Ah, but this is different, and you gentlemen out of them big ships; . . . but there! I dare say you will do. Join to-morrow.'

"I joined to-morrow. It was twenty-two years ago; and I was just twenty. How time passes! It was one

of the happiest days of my life. Fancy! Second mate for the first time—a really responsible officer! I wouldn't have thrown up my new billet for a fortune. The mate looked me over carefully. He was also an old chap, but of another stamp. He had a Roman nose, a snow-white, long beard, and his name was Mahon, but he insisted that it should be pronounced Mann. He was well connected; yet there was something wrong with his luck, and he had never got on.

"As to the captain, he had been for years in coasters, then in the Mediterranean, and last in the West Indian trade. He had never been round the Capes. He could just write a kind of sketchy hand, and didn't care for writing at all. Both were thorough good seamen of course, and between those two old chaps I felt like a small boy between two grandfathers.

"The ship also was old. Her name was the *Judea*. Queer name, isn't it? She belonged to a man Wilmer, Wilcox—some name like that; but he has been bankrupt and dead these twenty years or more, and his name don't matter. She had been laid up in Shadwell basin for ever so long. You may imagine her state. She was all rust, dust, grime—soot aloft, dirt on deck. To me it was like coming out of a palace into a ruined cottage. She was about 400 tons, had a primitive windlass, wooden latches to the doors, not a bit of brass about her, and a big square stern. There was on it, below her name in big letters, a lot of scrollwork, with the gilt off, and some sort of a coat of arms, with the motto 'Do or Die' underneath. I remember it took my fancy immensely. There was a touch of romance in it, something that made me love the old thing—something that appealed to my youth!

"We left London in ballast—sand ballast—to load a cargo of coal in a northern port for Bankok. Bankok!

I thrilled. I had been six years at sea, but had only seen Melbourne and Sydney, very good places, charming places in their way—but Bankok!

"We worked out of the Thames under canvas, with a North Sea pilot on board. His name was Jermyn, and he dodged all day long about the galley drying his handkerchief before the stove. Apparently he never slept. He was a dismal man, with a perpetual tear sparkling at the end of his nose, who either had been in trouble, or was in trouble, or expected to be in trouble—couldn't be happy unless something went wrong. He mistrusted my youth, my common-sense, and my seamanship, and made a point of showing it in a hundred little ways. I dare say he was right. It seems to me I knew very little then, and I know not much more now; but I cherish a hate for that Jermyn to this day.

"We were a week working up as far as Yarmouth Roads, and then we got into a gale—the famous October gale of twenty-two years ago. It was wind, lightning, sleet, snow, and a terrific sea. We were flying light, and you may imagine how bad it was when I tell you we had smashed bulwarks and a flooded deck. On the second night she shifted her ballast into the lee bow, and by that time we had been blown off somewhere on the Dogger Bank. There was nothing for it but go below with shovels and try to right her, and there we were in that vast hold, gloomy like a cavern, the tallow dips stuck and flickering on the beams, the gale howling above, the ship tossing about like mad on her side; there we all were, Jermyn, the captain, every one, hardly able to keep our feet, engaged on that gravedigger's work, and trying to toss shovelfuls of wet sand up to windward. At every tumble of the ship you could see vaguely in the dim light men falling down with a great flourish of shovels. One of the ship's boys (we had

two), impressed by the weirdness of the scene, wept as if his heart would break. We could hear him blubbering somewhere in the shadows.

"On the third day the gale died out, and by and by a north-country tug picked us up. We took sixteen days in all to get from London to the Tyne! When we got into dock we had lost our turn for loading, and they hauled us off to a tier where we remained for a month. Mrs. Beard (the captain's name was Beard) came from Colchester to see the old man. She lived on board. The crew of runners had left, and there remained only the officers, one boy and the steward, a mulatto who answered to the name of Abraham. Mrs. Beard was an old woman, with a face all wrinkled and ruddy like a winter apple, and the figure of a young girl. She caught sight of me once, sewing on a button, and insisted on having my shirts to repair. This was something different from the captains' wives I had known on board crack clippers. When I brought her the shirts, she said: 'And the socks? They want mending, I am sure, and John's—Captain Beard's—things are all in order now. I would be glad of something to do.' Bless the old woman. She overhauled my outfit for me, and meantime I read for the first time *Sartor Resartus* and Burnaby's *Ride to Khiva*. I didn't understand much of the first then; but I remember I preferred the soldier to the philosopher at the time; a preference which life has only confirmed. One was a man, and the other was either more—or less. However, they are both dead and Mrs. Beard is dead, and youth, strength, genius, thoughts, achievements, simple hearts—all die. . . . No matter.

"They loaded us at last. We shipped a crew. Eight able seamen and two boys. We hauled off one evening to the buoys at the dock-gates, ready to go out,

and with a fair prospect of beginning the voyage next day. Mrs. Beard was to start for home by a late train. When the ship was fast we went to tea. We sat rather silent through the meal—Mahon, the old couple, and I. I finished first, and slipped away for a smoke, my cabin being in a deck-house just against the poop. It was high water, blowing fresh with a drizzle; the double dock-gates were opened, and the steam-colliers were going in and out in the darkness with their lights burning bright, a great plashing of propellers, rattling of winches, and a lot of hailing on the pier-heads. I watched the procession of head-lights gliding high and of green lights gliding low in the night, when suddenly a red gleam flashed at me, vanished, came into view again, and remained. The fore-end of a steamer loomed up close. I shouted down the cabin, 'Come up, quick!' and then heard a startled voice saying afar in the dark, 'Stop her, sir.' A bell jingled. Another voice cried warningly, 'We are going right into that barque, sir.' The answer to this was a gruff 'All right,' and the next thing was a heavy crash as the steamer struck a glancing blow with the bluff of her bow about our fore-rigging. There was a moment of confusion, yelling, and running about. Steam roared. Then somebody was heard saying, 'All clear, sir.' . . . 'Are you all right?' asked the gruff voice. I had jumped forward to see the damage, and hailed back, 'I think so.' 'Easy astern,' said the gruff voice. A bell jingled. 'What steamer is that?' screamed Mahon. By that time she was no more to us than a bulky shadow manœuvring a little way off. They shouted at us some name—a woman's name, Miranda or Melissa—or some such thing. 'This means another month in this beastly hole,' said Mahon to me, as we peered with lamps about the splintered bulwarks and broken braces. 'But where's the captain?'

"We had not heard or seen anything of him all that time. We went aft to look. A doleful voice arose hailing somewhere in the middle of the dock, '*Judea* ahoy!' . . . How the devil did he get there? . . . 'Hallo!' we shouted. 'I am adrift in our boat without oars,' he cried. A belated water-man offered his services, and Mahon struck a bargain with him for half-a-crown to tow our skipper alongside; but it was Mrs. Beard that came up the ladder first. They had been floating about the dock in that mizzly cold rain for nearly an hour. I was never so surprised in my life.

"It appears that when he heard my shout 'Come up' he understood at once what was the matter, caught up his wife, ran on deck, and across, and down into our boat, which was fast to the ladder. Not bad for a sixty-year-old. Just imagine that old fellow saving heroically in his arms that old woman—the woman of his life. He set her down on a thwart, and was ready to climb back on board when the painter came adrift somehow, and away they went together. Of course in the confusion we did not hear him shouting. He looked abashed. She said cheerfully, 'I suppose it does not matter my losing the train now?' 'No, Jenny—you go below and get warm,' he growled. Then to us: 'A sailor has no business with a wife—I say. There I was, out of the ship. Well, no harm done this time. Let's go and look at what that fool of a steamer smashed.'

"It wasn't much, but it delayed us three weeks. At the end of that time, the captain being engaged with his agents, I carried Mrs. Beard's bag to the railway-station and put her all comfy into a third-class carriage. She lowered the window to say, 'You are a good young man. If you see John—Captain Beard—without his muffler at night, just remind him from me to keep his throat well wrapped up.' 'Certainly, Mrs. Beard,' I

said. 'You are a good young man; I noticed how attentive you are to John—to Captain——' The train pulled out suddenly; I took my cap off to the old woman: I never saw her again. . . . Pass the bottle.

"We went to sea next day. When we made that start for Bankok we had been already three months out of London. We had expected to be a fortnight or so—at the outside.

"It was January, and the weather was beautiful—the beautiful sunny winter weather that has more charm than in the summer-time, because it is unexpected, and crisp, and you know it won't, it can't, last long. It's like a windfall, like a godsend, like an unexpected piece of luck.

"It lasted all down the North Sea, all down Channel; and it lasted till we were three hundred miles or so to the westward of the Lizards: then the wind went round to the sou'west and began to pipe up. In two days it blew a gale. The *Judea*, hove to, wallowed on the Atlantic like an old candle-box. It blew day after day: it blew with spite, without interval, without mercy, without rest. The world was nothing but an immensity of great foaming waves rushing at us, under a sky low enough to touch with the hand and dirty like a smoked ceiling. In the stormy space surrounding us there was as much flying spray as air. Day after day and night after night there was nothing round the ship but the howl of the wind, the tumult of the sea, the noise of water pouring over her deck. There was no rest for her and no rest for us. She tossed, she pitched, she stood on her head, she sat on her tail, she rolled, she groaned, and we had to hold on while on deck and cling to our bunks when below, in a constant effort of body and worry of mind.

"One night Mahon spoke through the small window of my berth. It opened right into my very bed, and I was lying there sleepless, in my boots, feeling as though I had not slept for years, and could not if I tried. He said excitedly—

"'You got the sounding-rod in here, Marlow? I can't get the pumps to suck. By God! it's no child's play.'

"I gave him the sounding-rod and lay down again, trying to think of various things—but I thought only of the pumps. When I came on deck they were still at it, and my watch relieved at the pumps. By the light of the lantern brought on deck to examine the sounding-rod I caught a glimpse of their weary, serious faces. We pumped all the four hours. We pumped all night, all day, all the week—watch and watch. She was working herself loose, and leaked badly—not enough to drown us at once, but enough to kill us with the work at the pumps. And while we pumped the ship was going from us piecemeal: the bulwarks went, the stanchions were torn out, the ventilators smashed, the cabin-door burst in. There was not a dry spot in the ship. She was being gutted bit by bit. The long-boat changed, as if by magic, into matchwood where she stood in her gripes. I had lashed her myself, and was rather proud of my handiwork, which had withstood so long the malice of the sea. And we pumped. And there was no break in the weather. The sea was white like a sheet of foam, like a caldron of boiling milk; there was not a break in the clouds, no—not the size of a man's hand—no, not for so much as ten seconds. There was for us no sky, there were for us no stars, no sun, no universe—nothing but angry clouds and an infuriated sea. We pumped watch and watch, for dear life; and it seemed to last for months, for years, for all eternity, as though we

had been dead and gone to a hell for sailors. We forgot the day of the week, the name of the month, what year it was, and whether we had ever been ashore. The sails blew away, she lay broadside on under a weather-cloth, the ocean poured over her, and we did not care. We turned those handles, and had the eyes of idiots. As soon as we had crawled on deck I used to take a round turn with a rope about the men, the pumps, and the mainmast, and we turned, we turned incessantly, with the water to our waists, to our necks, over our heads. It was all one. We had forgotten how it felt to be dry.

"And there was somewhere in me the thought: By Jove! this is the deuce of an adventure—something you read about; and it is my first voyage as second mate—and I am only twenty—and here I am lasting it out as well as any of these men, and keeping my chaps up to the mark. I was pleased. I would not have given up the experience for worlds. I had moments of exultation. Whenever the old dismantled craft pitched heavily with her counter high in the air, she seemed to me to throw up, like an appeal, like a defiance, like a cry to the clouds without mercy, the words written on her stern: '*Judea*, London. Do or Die.'

"O youth! The strength of it, the faith of it, the imagination of it! To me she was not an old rattle-trap carting about the world a lot of coal for a freight—to me she was the endeavour, the test, the trial of life I think of her with pleasure, with affection, with regret—as you would think of someone dead you have loved. I shall never forget her. . . . Pass the bottle.

"One night when tied to the mast, as I explained, we were pumping on, deafened with the wind, and without spirit enough in us to wish ourselves dead, a heavy

sea crashed aboard and swept clean over us. As soon as I got my breath I shouted, as in duty bound, 'Keep on, boys!' when suddenly I felt something hard floating on deck strike the calf of my leg. I made a grab at it and missed. It was so dark we could not see each other's faces within a foot—you understand.

"After that thump the ship kept quiet for a while, and the thing, whatever it was, struck my leg again. This time I caught it—and it was a saucepan. At first, being stupid with fatigue and thinking of nothing but the pumps, I did not understand what I had in my hand. Suddenly it dawned upon me, and I shouted, 'Boys, the house on deck is gone. Leave this, and let's look for the cook.'

"There was a deck-house forward, which contained the galley, the cook's berth, and the quarters of the crew. As we had expected for days to see it swept away, the hands had been ordered to sleep in the cabin—the only safe place in the ship. The steward, Abraham, however, persisted in clinging to his berth, stupidly, like a mule—from sheer fright I believe, like an animal that won't leave a stable falling in an earthquake. So we went to look for him. It was chancing death, since once out of our lashings we were as exposed as if on a raft. But we went. The house was shattered as if a shell had exploded inside. Most of it had gone overboard—stove, men's quarters, and their property; all was gone; but two posts, holding a portion of the bulkhead to which Abraham's bunk was attached, remained as if by a miracle. We groped in the ruins and came upon this, and there he was, sitting in his bunk, surrounded by foam and wreckage, jabbering cheerfully to himself. He was out of his mind; completely and for ever mad, with this sudden shock coming upon the dag-end of his endurance. We snatched him up, lugged

him aft, and pitched him head-first down the cabin companion. You understand there was no time to carry him down with infinite precautions and wait to see how he got on. Those below would pick him up at the bottom of the stairs all right. We were in a hurry to go back to the pumps. That business could not wait. A bad leak is an inhuman thing.

"One would think that the sole purpose of that fiendish gale had been to make a lunatic of that poor devil of a mulatto. It eased before morning, and next day the sky cleared, and as the sea went down the leak took up. When it came to bending a fresh set of sails the crew demanded to put back—and really there was nothing else to do. Boats gone, decks swept clean, cabin gutted, men without a stitch but what they stood in, stores spoiled, ship strained. We put her head for home, and—would you believe it? The wind came east right in our teeth. It blew fresh, it blew continuously. We had to beat up every inch of the way, but she did not leak so badly, the water keeping comparatively smooth. Two hours' pumping in every four is no joke —but it kept her afloat as far as Falmouth.

"The good people there live on casualties of the sea, and no doubt were glad to see us. A hungry crowd of shipwrights sharpened their chisels at the sight of that carcass of a ship. And, by Jove! they had pretty pickings off us before they were done. I fancy the owner was already in a tight place. There were delays. Then it was decided to take part of the cargo out and caulk her topsides. This was done, the repairs finished, cargo reshipped; a new crew came on board, and we went out—for Bankok. At the end of a week we were back again. The crew said they weren't going to Bankok—a hundred and fifty days' passage—in a something hooker that wanted pumping eight hours out

of the twenty-four; and the nautical papers inserted again the little paragraph: '*Judea*. Barque. Tyne to Bankok; coals; put back to Falmouth leaky and with crew refusing duty.'

"There were more delays—more tinkering. The owner came down for a day, and said she was as right as a little fiddle. Poor old Captain Beard looked like the ghost of a Geordie skipper—through the worry and humiliation of it. Remember he was sixty, and it was his first command. Mahon said it was a foolish business, and would end badly. I loved the ship more than ever, and wanted awfully to get to Bankok. To Bankok! Magic name, blessed name. Mesopotamia wasn't a patch on it. Remember I was twenty, and it was my first second-mate's billet, and the East was waiting for me.

"We went out and anchored in the outer roads with a fresh crew—the third. She leaked worse than ever. It was as if those confounded shipwrights had actually made a hole in her. This time we did not even go outside. The crew simply refused to man the windlass.

"They towed us back to the inner harbour, and we became a fixture, a feature, an institution of the place. People pointed us out to visitors as 'That 'ere barque that's going to Bankok—has been here six months—put back three times.' On holidays the small boys pulling about in boats would hail, '*Judea*, ahoy!' and if a head showed above the rail shouted, 'Where you bound to?—Bankok?' and jeered. We were only three on board. The poor old skipper mooned in the cabin. Mahon undertook the cooking, and unexpectedly developed all a Frenchman's genius for preparing nice little messes. I looked languidly after the rigging. We became citizens of Falmouth. Every shopkeeper knew us. At

the barber's or tobacconist's they asked familiarly, 'Do you think you will ever get to Bankok?' Meantime the owner, the underwriters, and the charterers squabbled amongst themselves in London, and our pay went on. . . . Pass the bottle.

"It was horrid. Morally it was worse than pumping for life. It seemed as though we had been forgotten by the world, belonged to nobody, would get nowhere; it seemed that, as if bewitched, we would have to live for ever and ever in that inner harbour, a derision and a byword to generations of long-shore loafers and dishonest boatmen. I obtained three months' pay and a five days' leave, and made a rush for London. It took me a day to get there and pretty well another to come back—but three months' pay went all the same. I don't know what I did with it. I went to a music-hall, I believe, lunched, dined, and supped in a swell place in Regent Street, and was back to time, with nothing but a complete set of Byron's works and a new railway rug to show for three months' work. The boat-man who pulled me off to the ship said: 'Hallo! I thought you had left the old thing. *She* will never get to Bankok.' 'That's all *you* know about it,' I said scornfully—but I didn't like that prophecy at all.

"Suddenly a man, some kind of agent to somebody, appeared with full powers. He had grog-blossoms all over his face, an indomitable energy, and was a jolly soul. We leaped into life again. A hulk came alongside, took our cargo, and then we went into dry dock to get our copper stripped. No wonder she leaked. The poor thing, strained beyond endurance by the gale, had, as if in disgust, spat out all the oakum of her lower seams. She was recaulked, new coppered, and made as tight as a bottle. We went back to the hulk and reshipped our cargo.

"Then, on a fine moonlight night, all the rats left the ship.

"We had been infested with them. They had destroyed our sails, consumed more stores than the crew, affably shared our beds and our dangers, and now, when the ship was made seaworthy, concluded to clear out. I called Mahon to enjoy the spectacle. Rat after rat appeared on our rail, took a last look over his shoulder, and leaped with a hollow thud into the empty hulk. We tried to count them, but soon lost the tale. Mahon said: 'Well, well! don't talk to me about the intelligence of rats. They ought to have left before, when we had that narrow squeak from foundering. There you have the proof how silly is the superstition about them. They leave a good ship for an old rotten hulk, where there is nothing to eat, too, the fools! . . . I don't believe they know what is safe or what is good for them, any more than you or I.'

"And after some more talk we agreed that the wisdom of rats had been grossly overrated, being in fact no greater than that of men.

"The story of the ship was known, by this, all up the Channel from Land's End to the Forelands, and we could get no crew on the south coast. They sent us one all complete from Liverpool, and we left once more—for Bankok.

"We had fair breezes, smooth water right into the tropics, and the old *Judea* lumbered along in the sunshine. When she went eight knots everything cracked aloft, and we tied our caps to our heads; but mostly she strolled on at the rate of three miles an hour. What could you expect? She was tired—that old ship. Her youth was where mine is—where yours is—you fellows who listen to this yarn; and what friend would throw your years and your weariness in your face? We didn't

grumble at her. To us aft, at least, it seemed as though we had been born in her, reared in her, had lived in her for ages, had never known any other ship. I would just as soon have abused the old village church at home for not being a cathedral.

"And for me there was also my youth to make me patient. There was all the East before me, and all life, and the thought that I had been tried in that ship and had come out pretty well. And I thought of men of old who, centuries ago, went that road in ships that sailed no better, to the land of palms, and spices, and yellow sands, and of brown nations ruled by kings more cruel than Nero the Roman, and more splendid than Solomon the Jew. The old bark lumbered on, heavy with her age and the burden of her cargo, while I lived the life of youth in ignorance and hope. She lumbered on through an interminable procession of days; and the fresh gilding flashed back at the setting sun, seemed to cry out over the darkening sea the words painted on her stern, '*Judea*, London. Do or Die.'

"Then we entered the Indian Ocean and steered northerly for Java Head. The winds were light. Weeks slipped by. She crawled on, do or die, and people at home began to think of posting us as overdue.

"One Saturday evening, I being off duty, the men asked me to give them an extra bucket of water or so—for washing clothes. As I did not wish to screw on the fresh-water pump so late, I went forward whistling, and with a key in my hand to unlock the forepeak scuttle, intending to serve the water out of a spare tank we kept there.

"The smell down below was as unexpected as it was frightful. One would have thought hundreds of paraffin-lamps had been flaring and smoking in that hole for days. I was glad to get out. The man with

me coughed and said, 'Funny smell, sir.' I answered negligently, 'It's good for the health they say,' and walked aft.

"The first thing I did was to put my head down the square of the midship ventilator. As I lifted the lid a visible breath, something like a thin fog, a puff of faint haze, rose from the opening. The ascending air was hot, and had a heavy, sooty, paraffiny smell. I gave one sniff, and put down the lid gently. It was no use choking myself. The cargo was on fire.

"Next day she began to smoke in earnest. You see it was to be expected, for though the coal was of a safe kind, that cargo had been so handled, so broken up with handling, that it looked more like smithy coal than anything else. Then it had been wetted—more than once. It rained all the time we were taking it back from the hulk, and now with this long passage it got heated, and there was another case of spontaneous combustion.

"The captain called us into the cabin. He had a chart spread on the table, and looked unhappy. He said, 'The coast of West Australia is near, but I mean to proceed to our destination. It is the hurricane month, too; but we will just keep her head for Bankok, and fight the fire. No more putting back anywhere, if we all get roasted. We will try first to stifle this 'ere damned combustion by want of air.'

"We tried. We battened down everything, and still she smoked. The smoke kept coming out through imperceptible crevices; it forced itself through bulkheads and covers; it oozed here and there and everywhere in slender threads, in an invisible film, in an incomprehensible manner. It made its way into the cabin, into the forecastle; it poisoned the sheltered places on the deck, it could be sniffed as high as the

mainyard. It was clear that if the smoke came out the air came in. This was disheartening. This combustion refused to be stifled.

"We resolved to try water, and took the hatches off. Enormous volumes of smoke, whitish, yellowish, thick, greasy, misty, choking, ascended as high as the trucks. All hands cleared out aft. Then the poisonous cloud blew away, and we went back to work in a smoke that was no thicker now than that of an ordinary factory chimney.

"We rigged the force-pump, got the hose along, and by and by it burst. Well, it was as old as the ship—a prehistoric hose, and past repair. Then we pumped with the feeble head-pump, drew water with buckets, and in this way managed in time to pour lots of Indian Ocean into the main hatch. The bright stream flashed in sunshine, fell into a layer of white crawling smoke, and vanished on the black surface of coal. Steam ascended mingling with the smoke. We poured salt water as into a barrel without a bottom. It was our fate to pump in that ship, to pump out of her, to pump into her; and after keeping water out of her to save ourselves from being drowned, we frantically poured water into her to save ourselves from being burnt.

"And she crawled on, do or die, in the serene weather. The sky was a miracle of purity, a miracle of azure. The sea was polished, was blue, was pellucid, was sparkling like a precious stone, extending on all sides, all round to the horizon—as if the whole terrestrial globe had been one jewel, one colossal sapphire, a single gem fashioned into a planet. And on the lustre of the great calm waters the *Judea* glided imperceptibly, enveloped in languid and unclean vapours, in a lazy cloud that drifted to leeward, light and slow; a pestiferous cloud defiling the splendour of sea and sky.

"All this time of course we saw no fire. The cargo smouldered at the bottom somewhere. Once Mahon, as we were working side by side, said to me with a queer smile: 'Now, if she only would spring a tidy leak—like that time when we first left the Channel—it would put a stopper on this fire. Wouldn't it?' I remarked irrelevantly, 'Do you remember the rats?'

"We fought the fire and sailed the ship too as carefully as though nothing had been the matter. The steward cooked and attended on us. Of the other twelve men, eight worked while four rested. Everyone took his turn, captain included. There was equality, and if not exactly fraternity, then a deal of good feeling. Sometimes a man, as he dashed a bucketful of water down the hatchway, would yell out, 'Hurrah for Bankok!' and the rest laughed. But generally we were taciturn and serious—and thirsty. Oh! how thirsty! And we had to be careful with the water. Strict allowance. The ship smoked, the sun blazed. . . . Pass the bottle.

"We tried everything. We even made an attempt to dig down to the fire. No good, of course. No man could remain more than a minute below. Mahon, who went first, fainted there, and the man who went to fetch him out did likewise. We lugged them out on deck. Then I leaped down to show how easily it could be done. They had learned wisdom by that time, and contented themselves by fishing for me with a chain-hook tied to a broom-handle, I believe. I did not offer to go and fetch up my shovel, which was left down below.

"Things began to look bad. We put the long-boat into the water. The second boat was ready to swing out. We had also another, a 14-foot thing, on davits aft, where it was quite safe.

"Then, behold, the smoke suddenly decreased. We redoubled our efforts to flood the bottom of the ship. In two days there was no smoke at all. Everybody was on the broad grin. This was on a Friday. On Saturday no work, but sailing the ship of course, was done. The men washed their clothes and their faces for the first time in a fortnight, and had a special dinner given them. They spoke of spontaneous combustion with contempt, and implied *they* were the boys to put out combustions. Somehow we all felt as though we each had inherited a large fortune. But a beastly smell of burning hung about the ship. Captain Beard had hollow eyes and sunken cheeks. I had never noticed so much before how twisted and bowed he was. He and Mahon prowled soberly about hatches and ventilators, sniffing. It struck me suddenly poor Mahon was a very, very old chap. As to me, I was as pleased and proud as though I had helped to win a great naval battle. O! Youth!

"The night was fine. In the morning a homeward-bound ship passed us hull down—the first we had seen for months; but we were nearing the land at last, Java Head being about 190 miles off, and nearly due north.

"Next day it was my watch on deck from eight to twelve. At breakfast the captain observed, 'It's wonderful how that smell hangs about the cabin.' About ten, the mate being on the poop, I stepped down on the main-deck for a moment. The carpenter's bench stood abaft the mainmast: I leaned against it sucking at my pipe, and the carpenter, a young chap, came to talk to me. He remarked, 'I think we have done very well, haven't we?' and then I perceived with annoyance the fool was trying to tilt the bench. I said curtly, 'Don't, Chips,' and immediately became aware of a queer sensation, of an absurd delusion,—I seemed

somehow to be in the air. I heard all round me like a pent-up breath released—as if a thousand giants simultaneously had said Phoo!—and felt a dull concussion which made my ribs ache suddenly. No doubt about it—I was in the air, and my body was describing a short parabola. But short as it was, I had the time to think several thoughts in, as far as I can remember, the following order: 'This can't be the carpenter—What is it?—Some accident—Submarine volcano?—Coals, gas!—By Jove! we are being blown up—Everybody's dead—I am falling into the after-hatch—I see fire in it.'

"The coal-dust suspended in the air of the hold had glowed dull-red at the moment of the explosion. In the twinkling of an eye, in an infinitesimal fraction of a second since the first tilt of the bench, I was sprawling full length on the cargo. I picked myself up and scrambled out. It was quick like a rebound. The deck was a wilderness of smashed timber, lying crosswise like trees in a wood after a hurricane; an immense curtain of soiled rags waved gently before me—it was the mainsail blown to strips. I thought, The masts will be toppling over directly; and to get out of the way bolted on all-fours towards the poop-ladder. The first person I saw was Mahon, with eyes like saucers, his mouth open, and the long white hair standing straight on end round his head like a silver halo. He was just about to go down when the sight of the main-deck stirring, heaving up, and changing into splinters before his eyes, petrified him on the top step. I stared at him in unbelief, and he stared at me with a queer kind of shocked curiosity. I did not know that I had no hair, no eyebrows, no eyelashes, that my young moustache was burnt off, that my face was black, one cheek laid open, my nose cut, and my chin bleeding. I had lost my cap

one of my slippers, and my shirt was torn to rags. Of all this I was not aware. I was amazed to see the ship still afloat, the poop-deck whole—and, most of all, to see anybody alive. Also the peace of the sky and the serenity of the sea were distinctly surprising. I suppose I expected to see them convulsed with horror. . . . Pass the bottle.

"There was a voice hailing the ship from somewhere —in the air, in the sky—I couldn't tell. Presently I saw the captain—and he was mad. He asked me eagerly, 'Where's the cabin-table?' and to hear such a question was a frightful shock. I had just been blown up, you understand, and vibrated with that experience, —I wasn't quite sure whether I was alive. Mahon began to stamp with both feet and yelled at him, 'Good God! don't you see the deck's blown out of her?' I found my voice, and stammered out as if conscious of some gross neglect of duty, 'I don't know where the cabin-table is.' It was like an absurd dream.

"Do you know what he wanted next? Well, he wanted to trim the yards. Very placidly, and as if lost in thought, he insisted on having the foreyard squared. 'I don't know if there's anybody alive,' said Mahon, almost tearfully. 'Surely,' he said, gently, 'there will be enough left to square the foreyard.'

"The old chap, it seems, was in his own berth winding up the chronometers, when the shock sent him spinning. Immediately it occurred to him—as he said afterwards —that the ship had struck something, and he ran out into the cabin. There, he saw, the cabin-table had vanished somewhere. The deck being blown up, it had fallen down into the lazarette of course. Where we had our breakfast that morning he saw only a great hole in the floor. This appeared to him so awfully mysterious, and impressed him so immensely, that what he saw and

heard after he got on deck were mere trifles in comparison. And, mark, he noticed directly the wheel deserted and his barque off her course—and his only thought was to get that miserable, stripped, undecked, smouldering shell of a ship back again with her head pointing at her port of destination. Bankok! That's what he was after. I tell you this quiet, bowed, bandy-legged, almost deformed little man was immense in the singleness of his idea and in his placid ignorance of our agitation. He motioned us forward with a commanding gesture, and went to take the wheel himself.

"Yes; that was the first thing we did—trim the yards of that wreck! No one was killed, or even disabled, but everyone was more or less hurt. You should have seen them! Some were in rags, with black faces, like coal-heavers, like sweeps, and had bullet heads that seemed closely cropped, but were in fact singed to the skin. Others, of the watch below, awakened by being shot out from their collapsing bunks, shivered incessantly, and kept on groaning even as we went about our work. But they all worked. That crew of Liverpool hard cases had in them the right stuff. It's my experience they always have. It is the sea that gives it—the vastness, the loneliness surrounding their dark stolid souls. Ah! Well! we stumbled, we crept, we fell, we barked our shins on the wreckage, we hauled. The masts stood, but we did not know how much they might be charred down below. It was nearly calm, but a long swell ran from the west and made her roll. They might go at any moment. We looked at them with apprehension. One could not foresee which way they would fall.

"Then we retreated aft and looked about us. The deck was a tangle of planks on edge, of planks on end, of splinters, of ruined woodwork. The masts rose from that chaos like big trees above a matted undergrowth.

The interstices of that mass of wreckage were full of something whitish, sluggish, stirring—of something that was like a greasy fog. The smoke of the invisible fire was coming up again, was trailing, like a poisonous thick mist in some valley choked with dead wood. Already lazy wisps were beginning to curl upwards amongst the mass of splinters. Here and there a piece of timber, stuck upright, resembled a post. Half of a fife-rail had been shot through the foresail, and the sky made a patch of glorious blue in the ignobly soiled canvas. A portion of several boards holding together had fallen across the rail, and one end protruded overboard, like a gangway leading upon nothing, like a gangway leading over the deep sea, leading to death—as if inviting us to walk the plank at once and be done with our ridiculous troubles. And still the air, the sky—a ghost, something invisible was hailing the ship.

"Someone had the sense to look over, and there was the helmsman, who had impulsively jumped overboard, anxious to come back. He yelled and swam lustily like a merman, keeping up with the ship. We threw him a rope, and presently he stood amongst us streaming with water and very crestfallen. The captain had surrendered the wheel, and apart, elbow on rail and chin in hand, gazed at the sea wistfully. We asked ourselves, What next? I thought, Now, this is something like. This is great. I wonder what will happen. O youth!

"Suddenly Mahon sighted a steamer far astern. Captain Beard said, 'We may do something with her yet.' We hoisted two flags, which said in the international language of the sea, 'On fire. Want immediate assistance.' The steamer grew bigger rapidly, and by and by spoke with two flags on her foremast, 'I am coming to your assistance.'

"In half an hour she was abreast, to windward, within

hail, and rolling slightly, with her engines stopped. We lost our composure, and yelled all together with excitement, 'We've been blown up'. A man in a white helmet, on the bridge, cried, 'Yes! All right! all right!' and he nodded his head, and smiled, and made soothing motions with his hand as though at a lot of frightened children. One of the boats dropped in the water, and walked towards us upon the sea with her long oars. Four Calashes pulled a swinging stroke. This was my first sight of Malay seamen. I've known them since, but what struck me then was their unconcern: they came alongside, and even the bowman standing up and holding to our main-chains with the boat-hook did not deign to lift his head for a glance. I thought people who had been blown up deserved more attention.

"A little man, dry like a chip and agile like a monkey, clambered up. It was the mate of the steamer. He gave one look, and cried, 'O boys—you had better quit.'

"We were silent. He talked apart with the captain for a time,—seemed to argue with him. Then they went away together to the steamer.

"When our skipper came back we learned that the steamer was the *Somerville*, Captain Nash, from West Australia to Singapore *via* Batavia with mails, and that the agreement was she should tow us to Anjer or Batavia, if possible, where we could extinguish the fire by scuttling, and then proceed on our voyage—to Bankok! The old man seemed excited. 'We will do it yet,' he said to Mahon, fiercely. He shook his fist at the sky. Nobody else said a word.

"At noon the steamer began to tow. She went ahead slim and high, and what was left of the *Judea* followed at the end of seventy fathom of tow-rope,—followed her swiftly like a cloud of smoke with mast-heads pro-

truding above. We went aloft to furl the sails. We coughed on the yards, and were careful about the bunts. Do you see the lot of us there, putting a neat furl on the sails of that ship doomed to arrive nowhere? There was not a man who didn't think that at any moment the masts would topple over. From aloft we could not see the ship for smoke, and they worked carefully, passing the gaskets with even turns. 'Harbour furl—aloft there!' cried Mahon from below.

"You understand this? I don't think one of those chaps expected to get down in the usual way. When we did I heard them saying to each other, 'Well, I thought we would come down overboard, in a lump—sticks and all—blame me if I didn't.' 'That's what I was thinking to myself,' would answer wearily another battered and bandaged scarecrow. And, mind, these were men without the drilled-in habit of obedience. To an onlooker they would be a lot of profane scallywags without a redeeming point. What made them do it—what made them obey me when I, thinking consciously how fine it was, made them drop the bunt of the foresail twice to try and do it better? What? They had no professional reputation—no examples, no praise. It wasn't a sense of duty; they all knew well enough how to shirk, and laze, and dodge—when they had a mind to it—and mostly they had. Was it the two pounds ten a-month that sent them there? They didn't think their pay half good enough. No; it was something in them, something inborn and subtle and everlasting. I don't say positively that the crew of a French or German merchantman wouldn't have done it, but I doubt whether it would have been done in the same way. There was a completeness in it, something solid like a principle, and masterful like an instinct—a disclosure of something secret—of that hidden something, that gift of

good or evil that makes racial difference, that shapes the fate of nations.

"It was that night at ten that, for the first time since we had been fighting it, we saw the fire. The speed of the towing had fanned the smouldering destruction. A blue gleam appeared forward, shining below the wreck of the deck. It wavered in patches, it seemed to stir and creep like the light of a glowworm. I saw it first, and told Mahon. 'Then the game's up,' he said. 'We had better stop this towing, or she will burst out suddenly fore and aft before we can clear out.' We set up a yell; rang bells to attract their attention; they towed on. At last Mahon and I had to crawl forward and cut the rope with an axe. There was no time to cast off the lashings. Red tongues could be seen licking the wilderness of splinters under our feet as we made our way back to the poop.

"Of course they very soon found out in the steamer that the rope was gone. She gave a loud blast of her whistle, her lights were seen sweeping in a wide circle, she came up ranging close along-side, and stopped. We were all in a tight group on the poop looking at her. Every man had saved a little bundle or a bag. Suddenly a conical flame with a twisted top shot up forward and threw upon the black sea a circle of light, with the two vessels side by side and heaving gently in its centre. Captain Beard had been sitting on the gratings still and mute for hours, but now he rose slowly and advanced in front of us, to the mizzen-shrouds. Captain Nash hailed: 'Come along! Look sharp. I have mail-bags on board. I will take you and your boats to Singapore.'

"'Thank you! No!' said our skipper. 'We must see the last of the ship.'

"'I can't stand by any longer,' shouted the other. 'Mails—you know.'

"'Ay! ay! We are all right.'

"'Very well! I'll report you in Singapore. . . . Good-bye!'

"He waved his hand. Our men dropped their bundles quietly. The steamer moved ahead, and passing out of the circle of light, vanished at once from our sight, dazzled by the fire which burned fiercely. And then I knew that I would see the East first as commander of a small boat. I thought it fine; and the fidelity to the old ship was fine. We should see the last of her. Oh, the glamour of youth! Oh, the fire of it, more dazzling than the flames of the burning ship, throwing a magic light on the wide earth, leaping audaciously to the sky, presently to be quenched by time, more cruel, more pitiless, more bitter than the sea—and like the flames of the burning ship surrounded by an impenetrable night.

* * * * * *

"The old man warned us in his gentle and inflexible way that it was part of our duty to save for the underwriters as much as we could of the ship's gear. Accordingly we went to work aft, while she blazed forward to give us plenty of light. We lugged out a lot of rubbish. What didn't we save? An old barometer fixed with an absurd quantity of screws nearly cost me my life: a sudden rush of smoke came upon me, and I just got away in time. There were various stores, bolts of canvas, coils of rope; the poop looked like a marine bazaar, and the boats were lumbered to the gunwales. One would have thought the old man wanted to take as much as he could of his first command with him. He was very, very quiet, but off his balance evidently. Would you believe it? He wanted to take a length of old stream-cable and a kedge-anchor with him in the long-boat. We said, 'Ay, ay, sir,' deferentially, and on

the quiet let the things slip overboard. The heavy medicine-chest went that way, two bags of green coffee, tins of paint—fancy, paint!—a whole lot of things. Then I was ordered with two hands into the boats to make a stowage and get them ready against the time it would be proper for us to leave the ship.

"We put everything straight, stepped the long-boat's mast for our skipper, who was to take charge of her, and I was not sorry to sit down for a moment. My face felt raw, every limb ached as if broken, I was aware of all my ribs, and would have sworn to a twist in the backbone. The boats, fast astern, lay in a deep shadow, and all around I could see the circle of the sea lighted by the fire. A gigantic flame arose forward straight and clear. It flared fierce, with noises like the whirr of wings, with rumbles as of thunder. There were cracks, detonations, and from the cone of flame the sparks flew upwards, as man is born to trouble, to leaky ships, and to ships that burn.

"What bothered me was that the ship, lying broadside to the swell and to such wind as there was—a mere breath—the boats would not keep astern where they were safe, but persisted, in a pig-headed way boats have, in getting under the counter and then swinging alongside. They were knocking about dangerously and coming near the flame, while the ship rolled on them, and, of course, there was always the danger of the masts going over the side at any moment. I and my two boat-keepers kept them off as best we could, with oars and boat-hooks; but to be constantly at it became exasperating, since there was no reason why we should not leave at once. We could not see those on board, nor could we imagine what caused the delay. The boat-keepers were swearing feebly, and I had not only my share of the work but also had to keep at it two men

who showed a constant inclination to lay themselves down and let things slide.

"At last I hailed, 'On deck there,' and someone looked over. 'We're ready here,' I said. The head disappeared, and very soon popped up again. 'The captain says, All right, sir, and to keep the boats well clear of the ship.'

"Half an hour passed. Suddenly there was a frightful racket, rattle, clanking of chain, hiss of water, and millions of sparks flew up into the shivering column of smoke that stood leaning slightly above the ship. The cat-heads had burned away, and the two red-hot anchors had gone to the bottom, tearing out after them two hundred fathom of red-hot chain. The ship trembled, the mass of flame swayed as if ready to collapse, and the fore top-gallant-mast fell. It darted down like an arrow of fire, shot under, and instantly leaping up within an oar's-length of the boats, floated quietly, very black on the luminous sea. I hailed the deck again. After some time a man in an unexpectedly cheerful but also muffled tone, as though he had been trying to speak with his mouth shut, informed me, 'Coming directly, sir,' and vanished. For a long time I heard nothing but the whirr and roar of the fire. There were also whistling sounds. The boats jumped, tugged at the painters, ran at each other playfully, knocked their sides together, or, do what we would, swung in a bunch against the ship's side. I couldn't stand it any longer, and swarming up a rope, clambered aboard over the stern.

"It was as bright as day. Coming up like this, the sheet of fire facing me was a terrifying sight, and the heat seemed hardly bearable at first. On a settee cushion dragged out of the cabin Captain Beard, his legs drawn up and one arm under his head, slept with

the light playing on him. Do you know what the rest were busy about? They were sitting on deck right aft, round an open case, eating bread and cheese and drinking bottled stout.

"On the background of flames twisting in fierce tongues above their heads they seemed at home like salamanders, and looked like a band of desperate pirates. The fire sparkled in the whites of their eyes, gleamed on patches of white skin seen through the torn shirts. Each had the marks as of a battle about him—bandaged heads, tied-up arms, a strip of dirty rag round a knee—and each man had a bottle between his legs and a chunk of cheese in his hand. Mahon got up. With his handsome and disreputable head, his hooked profile, his long white beard, and with an uncorked bottle in his hand, he resembled one of those reckless sea-robbers of old making merry amidst violence and disaster. 'The last meal on board,' he explained solemnly. 'We had nothing to eat all day, and it was no use leaving all this.' He flourished the bottle and indicated the sleeping skipper. 'He said he couldn't swallow anything, so I got him to lie down,' he went on; and as I stared, 'I don't know whether you are aware, young fellow, the man had no sleep to speak of for days—and there will be dam' little sleep in the boats.' 'There will be no boats by-and-by if you fool about much longer,' I said, indignantly. I walked up to the skipper and shook him by the shoulder. At last he opened his eyes, but did not move. 'Time to leave her, sir,' I said quietly.

"He got up painfully, looked at the flames, at the sea sparkling round the ship, and black, black as ink farther away; he looked at the stars shining dim through a thin veil of smoke in a sky black, black as Erebus.

"'Youngest first,' he said.

"And the ordinary seaman, wiping his mouth with

the back of his hand, got up, clambered over the taffrail, and vanished. Others followed. One, on the point of going over, stopped short to drain his bottle, and with a great swing of his arm flung it at the fire. 'Take this!' he cried.

"The skipper lingered disconsolately, and we left him to commune alone for a while with his first command. Then I went up again and brought him away at last. It was time. The ironwork on the poop was hot to the touch.

"Then the painter of the long-boat was cut, and the three boats, tied together, drifted clear of the ship. It was just sixteen hours after the explosion when we abandoned her. Mahon had charge of the second boat, and I had the smallest—the 14-foot thing. The long-boat would have taken the lot of us; but the skipper said we must save as much property as we could—for the underwriters—and so I got my first command. I had two men with me, a bag of biscuits, a few tins of meat, and a breaker of water. I was ordered to keep close to the long-boat, that in case of bad weather we might be taken into her.

"And do you know what I thought? I thought I would part company as soon as I could. I wanted to have my first command all to myself. I wasn't going to sail in a squadron if there were a chance for independent cruising. I would make land by myself. I would beat the other boats. Youth! All youth! The silly, charming, beautiful youth.

"But we did not make a start at once. We must see the last of the ship. And so the boats drifted about that night, heaving and setting on the swell. The men dozed, waked, sighed, groaned. I looked at the burning ship.

"Between the darkness of earth and heaven she was

burning fiercely upon a disc of purple sea shot by the blood-red play of gleams; upon a disc of water glittering and sinister. A high, clear flame, an immense and lonely flame, ascended from the ocean, and from its summit the black smoke poured continuously at the sky. She burned furiously; mournful and imposing like a funeral pile kindled in the night, surrounded by the sea, watched over by the stars. A magnificent death had come like a grace, like a gift, like a reward to that old ship at the end of her laborious days. The surrender of her weary ghost to the keeping of stars and sea was stirring like the sight of a glorious triumph. The masts fell just before daybreak, and for a moment there was a burst and turmoil of sparks that seemed to fill with flying fire the night patient and watchful, the vast night lying silent upon the sea. At daylight she was only a charred shell, floating still under a cloud of smoke and bearing a glowing mass of coal within.

"Then the oars were got out, and the boats forming in a line moved round her remains as if in procession —the long-boat leading. As we pulled across her stern a slim dart of fire shot out viciously at us, and suddenly she went down, head first, in a great hiss of steam. The unconsumed stern was the last to sink; but the paint had gone, had cracked, had peeled off, and there were no letters, there was no word, no stubborn device that was like her soul, to flash at the rising sun her creed and her name.

"We made our way north. A breeze sprang up, and about noon all the boats came together for the last time. I had no mast or sail in mine, but I made a mast out of a spare oar and hoisted a boat-awning for a sail, with a boat-hook for a yard. She was certainly over-masted, but I had the satisfaction of knowing that with the wind aft I could beat the other two. I had to wait for them.

Then we all had a look at the captain's chart, and, after a sociable meal of hard bread and water, got our last instructions. These were simple: steer north, and keep together as much as possible. 'Be careful with that jury-rig, Marlow,' said the captain; and Mahon, as I sailed proudly past his boat, wrinkled his curved nose and hailed, 'You will sail that ship of yours under water, if you don't look out, young fellow.' He was a malicious old man—and may the deep sea where he sleeps now rock him gently, rock him tenderly to the end of time!

"Before sunset a thick rain-squall passed over the two boats, which were far astern, and that was the last I saw of them for a time. Next day I sat steering my cockle-shell—my first command—with nothing but water and sky around me. I did sight in the afternoon the upper sails of a ship far away, but said nothing, and my men did not notice her. You see I was afraid she might be homeward bound, and I had no mind to turn back from the portals of the East. I was steering for Java—another blessed name—like Bankok, you know. I steered many days.

"I need not tell you what it is to be knocking about in an open boat. I remember nights and days of calm, when we pulled, we pulled, and the boat seemed to stand still, as if bewitched within the circle of the sea horizon. I remember the heat, the deluge of rain-squalls that kept us baling for dear life (but filled our water-cask), and I remember sixteen hours on end with a mouth dry as a cinder and a steering-oar over the stern to keep my first command head on to a breaking sea. I did not know how good a man I was till then. I remember the drawn faces, the dejected figures of my two men, and I remember my youth and the feeling that will never come back any more—the feeling that I could last for ever, outlast the sea, the earth, and all men; the

deceitful feeling that lures us on to joys, to perils, to love, to vain effort—to death; the triumphant conviction of strength, the heat of life in the handful of dust, the glow in the heart that with every year grows dim, grows cold, grows small, and expires—and expires, too soon, too soon—before life itself.

"And this is how I see the East. I have seen its secret places and have looked into its very soul; but now I see it always from a small boat, a high outline of mountains, blue and afar in the morning; like faint mist at noon; a jagged wall of purple at sunset. I have the feel of the oar in my hand, the vision of a scorching blue sea in my eyes. And I see a bay, a wide bay, smooth as glass and polished like ice, shimmering in the dark. A red light burns far off upon the gloom of the land, and the night is soft and warm. We drag at the oars with aching arms, and suddenly a puff of wind, a puff faint and tepid and laden with strange odours of blossoms, of aromatic wood, comes out of the still night—the first sigh of the East on my face. That I can never forget. It was impalpable and enslaving, like a charm, like a whispered promise of mysterious delight.

"We had been pulling this finishing spell for eleven hours. Two pulled, and he whose turn it was to rest sat at the tiller. We had made out the red light in that bay and steered for it, guessing it must mark some small coasting port. We passed two vessels, outlandish and high-sterned, sleeping at anchor, and, approaching the light, now very dim, ran the boat's nose against the end of a jutting wharf. We were blind with fatigue. My men dropped the oars and fell off the thwarts as if dead. I made fast to a pile. A current rippled softly. The scented obscurity of the shore was grouped into vast masses, a density of colossal clumps of vegetation, probably—mute and fantastic shapes. And at their

foot the semicircle of a beach gleamed faintly, like an illusion. There was not a light, not a stir, not a sound. The mysterious East faced me, perfumed like a flower, silent like death, dark like a grave.

"And I sat weary beyond expression, exulting like a conqueror, sleepless and entranced as if before a profound, a fateful enigma.

"A splashing of oars, a measured dip reverberating on the level of water, intensified by the silence of the shore into loud claps, made me jump up. A boat, a European boat, was coming in. I invoked the name of the dead; I hailed: *Judea* ahoy! A thin shout answered.

"It was the captain. I had beaten the flagship by three hours, and I was glad to hear the old man's voice again, tremulous and tired. 'Is it you, Marlow?' 'Mind the end of that jetty, sir,' I cried.

"He approached cautiously, and brought up with the deep-sea lead-line which we had saved—for the underwriters. I eased my painter and fell alongside. He sat, a broken figure at the stern, wet with dew, his hands clasped in his lap. His men were asleep already. 'I had a terrible time of it,' he murmured. 'Mahon is behind—not very far.' We conversed in whispers, in low whispers, as if afraid to wake up the land. Guns, thunder, earthquakes would not have awakened the men just then.

"Looking round as we talked, I saw away at sea a bright light travelling in the night. 'There's a steamer passing the bay,' I said. She was not passing, she was entering, and she even came close and anchored. 'I wish,' said the old man, 'you would find out whether she is English. Perhaps they could give us a passage somewhere.' He seemed nervously anxious. So by dint of punching and kicking I started one of my men into a

state of somnambulism, and giving him an oar, took another and pulled towards the lights of the steamer.

"There was a murmur of voices in her, metallic hollow clangs of the engine-room, footsteps on the deck. Her ports shone, round like dilated eyes. Shapes moved about, and there was a shadowy man high up on the bridge. He heard my oars.

"And then, before I could open my lips, the East spoke to me, but it was in a Western voice. A torrent of words was poured into the enigmatical, the fateful silence; outlandish, angry words, mixed with words and even whole sentences of good English, less strange but even more surprising. The voice swore and cursed violently; it riddled the solemn peace of the bay by a volley of abuse. It began by calling me Pig, and from that went crescendo into unmentionable adjectives—in English. The man up there raged aloud in two languages, and with a sincerity in his fury that almost convinced me I had, in some way, sinned against the harmony of the universe. I could hardly see him, but began to think he would work himself into a fit.

"Suddenly he ceased, and I could hear him snorting and blowing like a porpoise. I said—

"'What steamer is this, pray?'

"'Eh? What's this? And who are you?'

"'Castaway crew of an English barque burnt at sea. We came here to-night. I am the second mate. The captain is in the long-boat, and wishes to know if you would give us a passage somewhere.'

"'Oh, my goodness! I say. . . . This is the *Celestial* from Singapore on her return trip. I'll arrange with your captain in the morning, . . . and, . . . I say, . . . did you hear me just now?'

"'I should think the whole bay heard you.'

"'I thought you were a shore-boat. Now, look here

—this infernal lazy scoundrel of a caretaker has gone to sleep again—curse him. The light is out, and I nearly ran foul of the end of this damned jetty. This is the third time he plays me this trick. Now, I ask you, can anybody stand this kind of thing? It's enough to drive a man out of his mind. I'll report him. . . . I'll get the Assistant Resident to give him the sack, by . . . ! See—there's no light. It's out, isn't it? I take you to witness the light's out. There should be a light, you know. A red light on the——'

"'There was a light,' I said, mildly.

"'But it's out, man! What's the use of talking like this? You can see for yourself it's out—don't you? If you had to take a valuable steamer along this God-forsaken coast you would want a light, too. I'll kick him from end to end of his miserable wharf. You'll see if I don't. I will——'

"'So I may tell my captain you'll take us?' I broke in.

"'Yes, I'll take you. Good-night,' he said, brusquely.

"I pulled back, made fast again to the jetty, and then went to sleep at last. I had faced the silence of the East. I had heard some of its language. But when I opened my eyes again the silence was as complete as though it had never been broken. I was lying in a flood of light, and the sky had never looked so far, so high, before. I opened my eyes and lay without moving.

"And then I saw the men of the East—they were looking at me. The whole length of the jetty was full of people. I saw brown, bronze, yellow faces, the black eyes, the glitter, the colour of an Eastern crowd. And all these beings stared without a murmur, without a sigh, without a movement. They stared down at the boats, at the sleeping men who at night had come to

them from the sea. Nothing moved. The fronds of palms stood still against the sky. Not a branch stirred along the shore, and the brown roofs of hidden houses peeped through the green foliage, through the big leaves that hung shining and still like leaves forged of heavy metal. This was the East of the ancient navigators, so old, so mysterious, resplendent and sombre, living and unchanged, full of danger and promise. And these were the men. I sat up suddenly. A wave of movement passed through the crowd from end to end, passed along the heads, swayed the bodies, ran along the jetty like a ripple on the water, like a breath of wind on a field—and all was still again. I see it now—the wide sweep of the bay, the glittering sands, the wealth of green infinite and varied, the sea blue like the sea of a dream, the crowd of attentive faces, the blaze of vivid colour—the water reflecting it all, the curve of the shore, the jetty, the high-sterned outlandish craft floating still, and the three boats with the tired men from the West sleeping, unconscious of the land and the people and of the violence of sunshine. They slept thrown across the thwarts, curled on bottom-boards, in the careless attitudes of death. The head of the old skipper, leaning back in the stern of the long-boat, had fallen on his breast, and he looked as though he would never wake. Farther out old Mahon's face was upturned to the sky, with the long white beard spread out on his breast, as though he had been shot where he sat at the tiller; and a man, all in a heap in the bows of the boat, slept with both arms embracing the stem-head and with his cheek laid on the gunwale. The East looked at them without a sound.

"I have known its fascination since; I have seen the mysterious shores, the still water, the lands of brown nations, where a stealthy Nemesis lies in wait, pursues,

overtakes so many of the conquering race, who are proud of their wisdom, of their knowledge, of their strength. But for me all the East is contained in that vision of my youth. It is all in that moment when I opened my young eyes on it. I came upon it from a tussle with the sea—and I was young—and I saw it looking at me. And this is all that is left of it! Only a moment; a moment of strength, of romance, of glamour—of youth! . . . A flick of sunshine upon a strange shore, the time to remember, the time for a sigh, and—good-bye!—Night—Good-bye . . . !"

He drank.

"Ah! The good old time—the good old time. Youth and the sea. Glamour and the sea! The good, strong sea, the salt, bitter sea, that could whisper to you and roar at you and knock your breath out of you."

He drank again.

"By all that's wonderful it is the sea, I believe, the sea itself—or is it youth alone? Who can tell? But you here—you all had something out of life: money, love—whatever one gets on shore—and, tell me, wasn't that the best time, that time when we were young at sea; young and had nothing, on the sea that gives nothing, except hard knocks—and sometimes a chance to feel your strength—that only—what you all regret?"

And we all nodded at him: the man of finance, the man of accounts, the man of law, we all nodded at him over the polished table that like a still sheet of brown water reflected our faces, lined, wrinkled; our faces marked by toil, by deceptions, by success, by love; our weary eyes looking still, looking always, looking anxiously for something out of life, that while it is expected is already gone—has passed unseen, in a sigh, in a flash—together with the youth, with the strength, with the romance of illusions.

THE TIME MACHINE

A NOVELETTE BY

H. G. Wells

FROM "THE SHORT STORIES OF H. G. WELLS"

FOCUSING his eye upon the remote past and the distant future, Mr. Wells writes one of the most powerful creations of his cosmic imagination in this tale of "The Time Machine," which enables its inventor to travel through time, to gather comparative perspectives of centuries to come, and to fall in love a thousand years after his death.

THE TIME MACHINE

§ 1

THE Time Traveller (for so it will be convenient to speak of him) was expounding a recondite matter to us. His grey eyes shone and twinkled, and his usually pale face was flushed and animated. The fire burned brightly, and the soft radiance of the incandescent lights in the lilies of silver caught the bubbles that flashed and passed in our glasses. Our chairs, being his patents, embraced and caressed us rather than submitted to be sat upon, and there was that luxurious after-dinner atmosphere when thought runs gracefully free of the trammels of precision. And he put it to us in this way—marking the points with a lean forefinger—as we sat and lazily admired his earnestness over this new paradox (as we thought it) and his fecundity.

"You must follow me carefully. I shall have to controvert one or two ideas that are almost universally accepted. The geometry, for instance, they taught you at school is founded on a misconception."

"Is not that rather a large thing to expect us to begin upon?" said Filby, an argumentative person with red hair.

"I do not mean to ask you to accept anything without reasonable ground for it. You will soon admit as much as I need from you. You know of course that a mathematical line, a line of thickness *nil*, has no real existence. They taught you that? Neither has a mathematical plane. These things are mere abstractions."

"That is all right," said the Psychologist.

"Nor, having only length, breadth, and thickness, can a cube have a real existence."

"There I object," said Filby. "Of course a solid body may exist. All real things——"

"So most people think. But wait a moment. Can an *instantaneous* cube exist?"

"Don't follow you," said Filby.

"Can a cube that does not last for any time at all have a real existence?"

Filby became pensive. "Clearly," the Time Traveller proceeded, "any real body must have extension in *four* directions: it must have Length, Breadth, Thickness, and—Duration. But through a natural infirmity of the flesh, which I will explain to you in a moment, we incline to overlook this fact. There are really four dimensions, three which we call the three planes of Space, and a fourth, Time. There is, however, a tendency to draw an unreal distinction between the former three dimensions and the latter, because it happens that our consciousness moves intermittently in one direction along the latter from the beginning to the end of our lives."

"That," said a very young man, making spasmodic efforts to relight his cigar over the lamp; "that . . . very clear indeed."

"Now, it is very remarkable that this is so extensively overlooked," continued the Time Traveller, with a slight accession of cheerfulness. "Really this is what is meant by the Fourth Dimension, though some people who talk about the Fourth Dimension do not know they mean it. It is only another way of looking at Time. *There is no difference between Time and any of the three dimensions of Space except that our consciousness moves along it.* But some foolish people have got hold of the wrong side of that idea. You have all heard what they have to say about this Fourth Dimension?"

"*I* have not," said the Provincial Mayor.

"It is simply this. That Space, as our mathematicians have it, is spoken of as having three dimensions, which one may call Length, Breadth, and Thickness, and is always definable by reference to three planes, each at right angles to the others. But some philosophical people have been asking why *three* dimensions particularly—why not another direction at right angles to the other three?—and have even tried to construct

a Four-Dimensional geometry. Professor Simon Newcomb was expounding this to the New York Mathematical Society only a month or so ago. You know how on a flat surface, which has only two dimensions, we can represent a figure of a three-dimensional solid, and similarly they think that by models of three dimensions they could represent one of four—if they could master the perspective of the thing. See?"

"I think so," murmured the Provincial Mayor; and, knitting his brows, he lapsed into an introspective state, his lips moving as one who repeats mystic words. "Yes, I think I see it now," he said after some time, brightening in a quite transitory manner.

"Well, I do not mind telling you I have been at work upon this geometry of Four Dimensions for some time. Some of my results are curious. For instance, here is a portrait of a man at eight years old, another at fifteen, another at seventeen, another at twenty-three, and so on. All these are evidently sections, as it were, Three-Dimensional representations of his Four-Dimensioned being, which is a fixed and unalterable thing.

"Scientific people," proceeded the Time Traveller, after the pause required for the proper assimilation of this, "know very well that Time is only a kind of Space. Here is a popular scientific diagram, a weather record. This line I trace with my finger shows the movement of the barometer. Yesterday it was so high, yesterday night it fell, then this morning it rose again, and so gently upward to here. Surely the mercury did not trace this line in any of the dimensions of Space generally recognised? But certainly it traced such a line, and that line, therefore, we must conclude was along the Time-Dimension."

"But," said the Medical Man, staring hard at a coal in the fire, "if Time is really only a fourth dimension of Space, why is it, and why has it always been, regarded as something different? And why cannot we move in Time as we move about in the other dimensions of Space?"

The Time Traveller smiled. "Are you so sure we can move freely in Space? Right and left we can go, backward and forward freely enough, and men always have done so. I admit we

move freely in two dimensions. But how about up and down? Gravitation limits us there."

"Not exactly," said the Medical Man. "There are balloons."

"But before the balloons, save for spasmodic jumping and the inequalities of the surface, man had no freedom of vertical movement."

"Still they could move a little up and down," said the Medical Man.

"Easier, far easier down than up."

"And you cannot move at all in Time, you cannot get away from the present moment."

"My dear sir, that is just where you are wrong. That is just where the whole world has gone wrong. We are always getting away from the present moment. Our mental existences, which are immaterial and have no dimensions, are passing along the Time-Dimension with a uniform velocity from the cradle to the grave. Just as we should travel *down* if we began our existence fifty miles above the earth's surface."

"But the great difficulty is this," interrupted the Psychologist. "You *can* move about in all directions of Space, but you cannot move about in Time."

"That is the germ of my great discovery. But you are wrong to say that we cannot move about in Time. For instance, if I am recalling an incident very vividly I go back to the instant of its occurrence: I become absent-minded, as you say. I jump back for a moment. Of course we have no means of staying back for any length of Time, any more than a savage or an animal has of staying six feet above the ground. But a civilised man is better off than the savage in this respect. He can go up against gravitation in a balloon, and why should he not hope that ultimately he may be able to stop or accelerate his drift along the Time-Dimension, or even turn about and travel the other way?"

"Oh, *this*," began Filby, "is all——"

"Why not?" said the Time Traveller.

"It's against reason," said Filby.

"What reason?" said the Time Traveller.

"You can show black is white by argument," said Filby, "but you will never convince me."

"Possibly not," said the Time Traveller. "But now you begin to see the object of my investigations into the geometry of Four Dimensions. Long ago I had a vague inkling of a machine——"

"To travel through Time!" exclaimed the Very Young Man.

"That shall travel indifferently in any direction of Space and Time, as the driver determines."

Filby contented himself with laughter.

"But I have experimental verification," said the Time Traveller.

"It would be remarkably convenient for the historian," the Psychologist suggested. "One might travel back and verify the accepted account of the Battle of Hastings, for instance!"

"Don't you think you would attract attention?" said the Medical Man. "Our ancestors had no great tolerance for anachronisms."

"One might get one's Greek from the very lips of Homer and Plato," the Very Young Man thought.

"In which case they would certainly plough you for the Little-go. The German scholars have improved Greek so much."

"Then there is the future," said the Very Young Man. "Just think! One might invest all one's money, leave it to accumulate at interest, and hurry on ahead!"

"To discover a society," said I, "erected on a strictly communistic basis."

"Of all the wild extravagant theories!" began the Psychologist.

"Yes, so it seemed to me, and so I never talked of it until——"

"Experimental verification!" cried I. "You are going to verify *that?*"

"The experiment!" cried Filby, who was getting brain-weary.

"Let's see your experiment anyhow," said the Psychologist, "though it's all humbug, you know."

The Time Traveller smiled round at us. Then, still smiling faintly, and with his hands deep in his trousers pockets, he walked slowly out of the room, and we heard his slippers shuffling down the long passage to his laboratory.

The Psychologist looked at us. "I wonder what he's got?"

"Some sleight-of-hand trick or other," said the Medical Man, and Filby tried to tell us about a conjurer he had seen at Burslem; but before he had finished his preface the Time Traveller came back, and Filby's anecdote collapsed.

The thing the Time Traveller held in his hand was a glittering metallic framework, scarcely larger than a small clock, and very delicately made. There was ivory in it, and some transparent crystalline substance. And now I must be explicit, for this that follows—unless his explanation is to be accepted—is an absolutely unaccountable thing. He took one of the small octagonal tables that were scattered about the room, and set it in front of the fire, with two legs on the hearth rug. On this table he placed the mechanism. Then he drew up a chair, and sat down. The only other object on the table was a small shaded lamp, the bright light of which fell full upon the model. There were also perhaps a dozen candles about, two in brass candlesticks upon the mantel and several in sconces, so that the room was brilliantly illuminated. I sat in a low armchair nearest the fire, and I drew this forward so as to be almost between the Time Traveller and the fireplace. Filby sat behind him, looking over his shoulder. The Medical Man and the Provincial Mayor watched him in profile from the right, the Psychologist from the left. The Very Young Man stood behind the Psychologist. We were all on the alert. It appears incredible to me that any kind of trick, however subtly conceived and however adroitly done, could have been played upon us under these conditions.

The Time Traveller looked at us, and then at the mechanism. "Well?" said the Psychologist.

"This little affair," said the Time Traveller, resting his elbows upon the table and pressing his hands together above

the apparatus, "is only a model. It is my plan for a machine to travel through time. You will notice that it looks singularly askew, and that there is an odd twinkling appearance about this bar, as though it was in some way unreal." He pointed to the part with his finger. "Also, here is one little white lever, and here is another."

The Medical Man got up out of his chair and peered into the thing. "It's beautifully made," he said.

"It took two years to make," retorted the Time Traveller. Then, when we had all imitated the action of the Medical Man, he said: "Now I want you clearly to understand that this lever, being pressed over, sends the machine gliding into the future, and this other reverses the motion. This saddle represents the seat of a time traveller. Presently I am going to press the lever, and off the machine will go. It will vanish, pass into future Time, and disappear. Have a good look at the thing. Look at the table too, and satisfy yourselves there is no trickery. I don't want to waste this model, and then be told I'm a quack."

There was a minute's pause perhaps. The Psychologist seemed about to speak to me, but changed his mind. Then the Time Traveller put forth his finger towards the lever. "No," he said suddenly. "Lend me your hand." And turning to the Psychologist, he took that individual's hand in his own and told him to put out his forefinger. So that it was the Psychologist himself who sent forth the model Time Machine on its interminable voyage. We all saw the lever turn. I am absolutely certain there was no trickery. There was a breath of wind, and the lamp flame jumped. One of the candles on the mantel was blown out, and the little machine suddenly swung round, became indistinct, was seen as a ghost for a second perhaps, as an eddy of faintly glittering brass and ivory; and it was gone—vanished! Save for the lamp the table was bare.

Every one was silent for a minute. Then Filby said he was damned.

The Psychologist recovered from his stupor, and suddenly looked under the table. At that the Time Traveller laughed

cheerfully. "Well?" he said, with a reminiscence of the Psychologist. Then, getting up, he went to the tobacco jar on the mantel, and with his back to us began to fill his pipe.

We stared at each other. "Look here," said the Medical Man, "are you in earnest about this? Do you seriously believe that that machine has travelled into time?"

"Certainly," said the Time Traveller, stooping to light a spill at the fire. Then he turned, lighting his pipe, to look at the Psychologist's face. (The Psychologist, to show that he was not unhinged, helped himself to a cigar and tried to light it uncut.) "What is more, I have a big machine nearly finished in there"—he indicated the laboratory—"and when that is put together I mean to have a journey on my own account."

"You mean to say that that machine has travelled into the future?" said Filby.

"Into the future or the past—I don't, for certain, know which."

After an interval the Psychologist had an inspiration. "It must have gone into the past if it has gone anywhere," he said.

"Why?" said the Time Traveller.

"Because I presume that it has not moved in space, and if it travelled into the future it would still be here all this time, since it must have travelled through this time."

"But," said I, "if it travelled into the past it would have been visible when we came first into this room; and last Thursday when we were here; and the Thursday before that; and so forth!"

"Serious objections," remarked the Provincial. Mayor, with an air of impartiality, turning towards the Time Traveller.

"Not a bit," said the Time Traveller, and, to the Psychologist: "You think. *You* can explain that. It's presentation below the threshold, you know, diluted presentation."

"Of course," said the Psychologist, and reassured us. "That's a simple point of psychology. I should have thought

of it. It's plain enough, and helps the paradox delightfully. We cannot see it, nor can we appreciate this machine, any more than we can the spoke of a wheel spinning, or a bullet flying through the air. If it is travelling through time fifty times or a hundred times faster than we are, if it gets through a minute while we get through a second, the impression it creates will of course be only one-fiftieth or one-hundredth of what it would make if it were not travelling in time. That's plain enough." He passed his hand through the space in which the machine had been. "You see?" he said, laughing.

We sat and stared at the vacant table for a minute or so. Then the Time Traveller asked us what we thought of it all.

"It sounds plausible enough to-night," said the Medical Man; "but wait until to-morrow. Wait for the common sense of the morning."

"Would you like to see the Time Machine itself?" asked the Time Traveller. And therewith, taking the lamp in his hand, he led the way down the long, draughty corridor to his laboratory. I remember vividly the flickering light, his queer, broad head in silhouette, the dance of the shadows, how we all followed him, puzzled but incredulous, and how there in the laboratory we beheld a larger edition of the little mechanism which we had seen vanish from before our eyes. Parts were of nickel, parts of ivory, parts had certainly been filed or sawn out of rock crystal. The thing was generally complete, but the twisted crystalline bars lay unfinished upon the bench beside some sheets of drawings, and I took one up for a better look at it. Quartz it seemed to be.

"Look here," said the Medical Man, "are you perfectly serious? Or is this a trick—like that ghost you showed us last Christmas?"

"Upon that machine," said the Time Traveller, holding the lamp aloft, "I intend to explore time. Is that plain? I was never more serious in my life."

None of us quite knew how to take it.

I caught Filby's eye over the shoulder of the Medical Man, and he winked at me solemnly.

§ 2

I think that at that time none of us quite believed in the Time Machine. The fact is, the Time Traveller was one of those men who are too clever to be believed: you never felt that you saw all round him; you always suspected some subtle reserve, some ingenuity in ambush, behind his lucid frankness. Had Filby shown the model and explained the matter in the Time Traveller's words, we should have shown *him* far less scepticism. For we should have perceived his motives: a pork butcher could understand Filby. But the Time Traveller had more than a touch of whim among his elements, and we distrusted him. Things that would have made the fame of a less clever man seemed tricks in his hands. It is a mistake to do things too easily. The serious people who took him seriously never felt quite sure of his deportment: they were somehow aware that trusting their reputations for judgment with him was like furnishing a nursery with egg-shell china. So I don't think any of us said very much about time travelling in the interval between that Thursday and the next, though its odd potentialities ran, no doubt, in most of our minds: its plausibility, that is, its practical incredibleness, the curious possibilities of anachronism and of utter confusion it suggested. For my own part, I was particularly preoccupied with the trick of the model. That I remember discussing with the Medical Man, whom I met on Friday at the Linnæan. He said he had seen a similar thing at Tübingen, and laid considerable stress on the blowing out of the candle. But how the trick was done he could not explain.

The next Thursday I went again to Richmond—I suppose I was one of the Time Traveller's most constant guests—and arriving late, found four or five men already assembled in his drawing-room. The Medical Man was standing before the fire with a sheet of paper in one hand and his watch in the other. I looked round for the Time Traveller, and—"It's half-past seven now," said the Medical Man. "I suppose we'd better have dinner?"

"Where's——?" said I, naming our host.

"You've just come? It's rather odd. He's unavoidably detained. He asks me in this note to lead off with dinner at seven if he's not back. Says he'll explain when he comes."

"It seems a pity to let the dinner spoil," said the Editor of a well-known daily paper; and thereupon the Doctor rang the bell.

The Psychologist was the only person besides the Doctor and myself who had attended the previous dinner. The other men were Blank, the Editor afore-mentioned, a certain journalist, and another—a quiet, shy man with a beard—whom I didn't know, and who, as far as my observation went, never opened his mouth all the evening. There was some speculation at the dinner table about the Time Traveller's absence, and I suggested time travelling, in a half-jocular spirit. The Editor wanted that explained to him, and the Psychologist volunteered a wooden account of the "ingenious paradox and trick" we had witnessed that day week. He was in the midst of his exposition when the door from the corridor opened slowly and without noise. I was facing the door, and saw it first. "Hallo!" I said. "At last!" And the door opened wider, and the Time Traveller stood before us. I gave a cry of surprise. "Good heavens! man, what's the matter?" cried the Medical Man, who saw him next. And the whole tableful turned towards the door.

He was in an amazing plight. His coat was dusty and dirty and smeared with green down the sleeves; his hair disordered, and as it seemed to me greyer—either with dust and dirt or because its colour had actually faded. His face was ghastly pale; his chin had a brown cut on it—a cut half healed; his expression was haggard and drawn, as by intense suffering. For a moment he hesitated in the doorway, as if he had been dazzled by the light. Then he came into the room. He walked with just such a limp as I have seen in footstore tramps. We stared at him in silence, expecting him to speak.

He said not a word, but came painfully to the table, and made a motion towards the wine. The Editor filled a glass of champagne, and pushed it towards him. He drained it, and it seemed to do him good: for he looked round the table, and the

ghost of his old smile flickered across his face. "What on earth have you been up to, man?" said the Doctor. The Time Traveller did not seem to hear. "Don't let me disturb you," he said, with a certain faltering articulation. "I'm all right." He stopped, held out his glass for more, and took it off at a draught. "That's good," he said. His eyes grew brighter, and a faint colour came into his cheeks. His glance flickered over our faces with a certain dull approval, and then went round the warm and comfortable room. Then he spoke again, still as it were feeling his way among his words. "I'm going to wash and dress, and then I'll come down and explain things. . . . Save me some of that mutton. I'm starving for a bit of meat."

He looked across at the Editor, who was a rare visitor, and hoped he was all right. The Editor began a question. "Tell you presently," said the Time Traveller. "I'm—funny! Be all right in a minute."

He put down his glass, and walked towards the staircase door. Again I remarked his lameness and the soft padding sound of his footfall, and standing up in my place, I saw his feet as he went out. He had nothing on them but a pair of tattered, bloodstained socks. Then the door closed upon him. I had half a mind to follow, till I remembered how he detested any fuss about himself. For a minute, perhaps, my mind was wool gathering. Then, "Remarkable Behaviour of an Eminent Scientist," I heard the Editor say, thinking (after his wont) in head-lines. And this brought my attention back to the bright dinner table.

"What's the game?" said the Journalist. "Has he been doing the Amateur Cadger? I don't follow." I met the eye of the Psychologist, and read my own interpretation in his face. I thought of the Time Traveller limping painfully upstairs. I don't think any one else had noticed his lameness.

The first to recover completely from this surprise was the Medical Man, who rang the bell—the Time Traveller hated to have servants waiting at dinner—for a hot plate. At that the Editor turned to his knife and fork with a grunt, and the Silent Man followed suit. The dinner was resumed. Conversa-

tion was exclamatory for a little while, with gaps of wonderment; and then the Editor got fervent in his curiosity. "Does our friend eke out his modest income with a crossing or has he his Nebuchadnezzar phases?" he inquired. "I feel assured it's this business of the Time Machine," I said, and took up the Psychologist's account of our previous meeting. The new guests were frankly incredulous. The Editor raised objections. "What *was* this time travelling? A man couldn't cover himself with dust by rolling in a paradox, could he?" And then, as the idea came home to him, he resorted to caricature. Hadn't they any clothes-brushes in the Future? The Journalist, too, would not believe at any price, and joined the Editor in the easy work of heaping ridicule on the whole thing. They were both the new kind of journalist—very joyous, irreverent young men. "Our Special Correspondent in the Day after To-morrow reports," the Journalist was saying—or rather shouting—when the Time Traveller came back. He was dressed in ordinary evening clothes, and nothing save his haggard look remained of the change that had startled me.

"I say," said the Editor hilariously, "these chaps here say you have been travelling into the middle of next week!! Tell us all about little Rosebery, will you? What will you take for the lot?"

The Time Traveller came to the place reserved for him without a word. He smiled quietly, in his old way. "Where's my mutton?" he said. "What a treat it is to stick a fork into meat again!"

"Story!" cried the Editor.

"Story be damned!" said the Time Traveller. "I want something to eat. I won't say a word until I get some peptone into my arteries. Thanks. And the salt."

"One word," said I. "Have you been time travelling?"

"Yes," said the Time Traveller, with his mouth full, nodding his head.

"I'd give a shilling a line for a verbatim note," said the Editor. The Time Traveller pushed his glass towards the Silent Man and rang it with his finger nail; at which the

Silent Man, who had been staring at his face, started convulsively, and poured him wine. The rest of the dinner was uncomfortable. For my own part, sudden questions kept on rising to my lips, and I dare say it was the same with the others. The Journalist tried to relieve the tension by telling anecdotes of Hettie Potter. The Time Traveller devoted his attention to his dinner, and displayed the appetite of a tramp. The Medical Man smoked a cigarette, and watched the Time Traveller through his eyelashes. The Silent Man seemed even more clumsy than usual, and drank champagne with regularity and determination out of sheer nervousness. At last the Time Traveller pushed his plate away, and looked round us. "I suppose I must apologise," he said. "I was simply starving. I've had a most amazing time." He reached out his hand for a cigar, and cut the end. "But come into the smoking-room. It's too long a story to tell over greasy plates." And ringing the bell in passing, he led the way into the adjoining room.

"You have told Blank, and Dash, and Chose about the machine?" he said to me, leaning back in his easy chair and naming the three new guests.

"But the thing's a mere paradox," said the Editor.

"I can't argue to-night. I don't mind telling you the story, but I can't argue. I will," he went on, "tell you the story of what has happened to me, if you like, but you must refrain from interruptions. I want to tell it. Badly. Most of it will sound like lying. So be it! It's true—every word of it, all the same. I was in my laboratory at four o'clock, and since then . . . I've lived eight days . . . such days as no human being ever lived before! I'm nearly worn out, but I shan't sleep till I've told this thing over to you. Then I shall go to bed. But no interruptions! Is it agreed?"

"Agreed," said the Editor, and the rest of us echoed "Agreed." And with that the Time Traveller began his story as I have set it forth. He sat back in his chair at first, and spoke like a weary man. Afterwards he got more animated. In writing it down I feel with only too much keenness the inadequacy of pen and ink—and, above all, my own inadequacy—to express its quality. You read, I will suppose,

attentively enough; but you cannot see the speaker's white, sincere face in the bright circle of the little lamp, nor hear the intonation of his voice. You cannot know how his expression followed the turns of his story! Most of us hearers were in shadow, for the candles in the smoking-room had not been lighted, and only the face of the Journalist and the legs of the Silent Man from the knees downward were illuminated. At first we glanced now and again at each other. After a time we ceased to do that, and looked only at the Time Traveller's face.

§ 3

"I told some of you last Thursday of the principles of the Time Machine, and showed you the actual thing itself, incomplete in the workshop. There it is now, a little travel-worn, truly; and one of the ivory bars is cracked, and a brass rail bent; but the rest of it's sound enough. I expected to finish it on Friday; but on Friday, when the putting together was nearly done, I found that one of the nickel bars was exactly one inch too short, and this I had to get remade; so that the thing was not complete until this morning. It was at ten o'clock to-day that the first of all Time Machines began its career. I gave it a last tap, tried all the screws again, put one more drop of oil on the quartz rod, and sat myself in the saddle. I suppose a suicide who holds a pistol to his skull feels much the same wonder at what will come next as I felt then. I took the starting lever in one hand and the stopping one in the other, pressed the first, and almost immediately the second. I seemed to reel; I felt a nightmare sensation of falling; and, looking round, I saw the laboratory exactly as before. Had anything happened? For a moment I suspected that my intellect had tricked me. Then I noted the clock. A moment before, as it seemed, it had stood at a minute or so past ten; now it was nearly half-past three!

"I drew a breath, set my teeth, gripped the starting lever with both hands, and went off with a thud. The laboratory got hazy and went dark. Mrs. Watchett came in and walked, apparently without seeing me, towards the garden door. I

suppose it took her a minute or so to traverse the place, but to me she seemed to shoot across the room like a rocket. I pressed the lever over to its extreme position. The night came like the turning out of a lamp, and in another moment came to-morrow. The laboratory grew faint and hazy, then fainter and ever fainter. To-morrow night came black, then day again, night again, day again, faster and faster still. An eddying murmur filled my ears, and a strange, dumb confusedness descended on my mind.

"I am afraid I cannot convey the peculiar sensations of time travelling. They are excessively unpleasant. There is a feeling exactly like that one has upon a switchback—of a helpless headlong motion! I felt the same horrible anticipation, too, of an imminent smash. As I put on pace, night followed day like the flapping of a black wing. The dim suggestion of the laboratory seemed presently to fall away from me, and I saw the sun hopping swiftly across the sky, leaping it every minute, and every minute marking a day. I supposed the laboratory had been destroyed and I had come into the open air. I had a dim impression of scaffolding, but I was already going too fast to be conscious of any moving things. The slowest snail that ever crawled dashed by too fast for me. The twinkling succession of darkness and light was excessively painful to the eye. Then, in the intermittent darknesses, I saw the moon spinning swiftly through her quarters from new to full, and had a faint glimpse of the circling stars. Presently, as I went on, still gaining velocity, the palpitation of night and day merged into one continuous greyness; the sky took on a wonderful deepness of blue, a splendid luminous colour like that of early twilight; the jerking sun became a streak of fire, a brilliant arch, in space; the moon a fainter fluctuating band; and I could see nothing of the stars, save now and then a brighter circle flickering in the blue.

"The landscape was misty and vague. I was still on the hillside upon which this house now stands, and the shoulder rose above me grey and dim. I saw trees growing and changing like puffs of vapour, now brown, now green; they grew, spread, shivered, and passed away. I saw huge buildings rise

up faint and fair, and pass like dreams. The whole surface of the earth seemed changed—melting and flowing under my eyes. The little hands upon the dials that registered my speed raced round faster and faster. Presently I noted that the sun belt swayed up and down, from solstice to solstice, in a minute or less, and that consequently my pace was over a year a minute; and minute by minute the white snow flashed across the world, and vanished, and was followed by the bright, brief green of spring.

"The unpleasant sensations of the start were less poignant now. They merged at last into a kind of hysterical exhilaration. I remarked indeed a clumsy swaying of the machine for which I was unable to account. But my mind was too confused to attend to it, so with a kind of madness growing upon me, I flung myself into futurity. At first I scarce thought of stopping, scarce thought of anything but these new sensations. But presently a fresh series of impressions grew up in my mind—a certain curiosity and therewith a certain dread—until at last they took complete possession of me. What strange developments of humanity, what wonderful advances upon our rudimentary civilisation, I thought, might not appear when I came to look nearly into the dim elusive world that raced and fluctuated before my eyes! I saw great and splendid architecture rising about me, more massive than any buildings of our own time, and yet, as it seemed, built of glimmer and mist. I saw a richer green flow up the hillside, and remain there without any wintry intermission. Even through the veil of my confusion the earth seemed very fair. And so my mind came round to the business of stopping.

"The peculiar risk lay in the possibility of my finding some substance in the space which I, or the machine, occupied. So long as I travelled at a high velocity through time, this scarcely mattered; I was, so to speak, attenuated—was slipping like a vapour through the interstices of intervening substances! But to come to a stop involved the jamming of myself, molecule by molecule, into whatever lay in my way; meant bringing my atoms into such intimate contact with those of the obstacle that a profound chemical reaction—

possibly a far-reaching explosion—would result, and blow myself and my apparatus out of all possible dimensions—into the Unknown. This possibility had occurred to me again and again while I was making the machine; but then I had cheerfully accepted it as an unavoidable risk—one of the risks a man has got to take! Now the risk was inevitable, I no longer saw it in the same cheerful light. The fact is that, insensibly, the absolute strangeness of everything, the sickly jarring and swaying of the machine, above all, the feeling of prolonged falling, had absolutely upset my nerve. I told myself that I could never stop, and with a gust of petulance I resolved to stop forthwith. Like an impatient fool, I lugged over the lever, and incontinently the thing went reeling over, and I was flung headlong through the air.

"There was the sound of a clap of thunder in my ears. I may have been stunned for a moment. A pitiless hail was hissing round me, and I was sitting on soft turf in front of the overset machine. Everything still seemed grey, but presently I remarked that the confusion in my ears was gone. I looked round me. I was on what seemed to be a little lawn in a garden, surrounded by rhododendron bushes, and I noticed that their mauve and purple blossoms were dropping in a shower under the beating of the hailstones. The rebounding, dancing hail hung in a cloud over the machine, and drove along the ground like smoke. In a moment I was wet to the skin. 'Fine hospitality,' said I, 'to a man who has travelled innumerable years to see you.'

"Presently I thought what a fool I was to get wet. I stood up and looked round me. A colossal figure, carved apparently in some white stone, loomed indistinctly beyond the rhododendrons through the hazy downpour. But all else of the world was invisible.

"My sensations would be hard to describe. As the columns of hail grew thinner, I saw the white figure more distinctly. It was very large, for a silver birch-tree touched its shoulder. It was of white marble, in shape something like a winged sphinx, but the wings, instead of being carried vertically at the sides, were spread so that it seemed to hover. The pedes-

tal, it appeared to me, was of bronze, and was thick with verdigris. It chanced that the face was towards me; the sightless eyes seemed to watch me; there was the faint shadow of a smile on the lips. It was greatly weather-worn, and that imparted an unpleasant suggestion of disease. I stood looking at it for a little space—half a minute, perhaps, or half an hour. It seemed to advance and to recede as the hail drove before it denser or thinner. At last I tore my eyes from it for a moment, and saw that the hail curtain had worn threadbare, and that the sky was lightening with the promise of the sun.

"I looked up again at the crouching white shape, and the full temerity of my voyage came suddenly upon me. What might appear when that hazy curtain was altogether withdrawn? What might not have happened to men? What if cruelty had grown into a common passion? What if in this interval the race had lost its manliness, and had developed into something inhuman, unsympathetic, and overwhelmingly powerful? I might seem some old-world savage animal, only the more dreadful and disgusting for our common likeness—a foul creature to be incontinently slain.

"Already I saw other vast shapes—huge buildings with intricate parapets and tall columns, with a wooded hillside dimly creeping in upon me through the lessening storm. I was seized with a panic fear. I turned frantically to the Time Machine, and strove hard to readjust it. As I did so the shafts of the sun smote through the thunderstorm. The grey downpour was swept aside and vanished like the trailing garments of a ghost. Above me, in the intense blue of the summer sky, some faint brown shreds of cloud whirled into nothingness. The great buildings about me stood out clear and distinct, shining with the wet of the thunderstorm, and picked out in white by the unmelted hailstones piled along their courses. I felt naked in a strange world. I felt as perhaps a bird may feel in the clear air, knowing the hawk wins above and will swoop. My fear grew to frenzy. I took a breathing space, set my teeth, and again grappled fiercely, wrist and knee, with the machine. It gave under my desperate onset and turned over. It struck my chin violently. One hand on the saddle, the

other on the lever, I stood panting heavily in attitude to mount again.

"But with this recovery of a prompt retreat my courage recovered. I looked more curiously and less fearfully at this world of the remote future. In a circular opening, high up in the wall of the nearer house, I saw a group of figures clad in rich soft robes. They had seen me, and their faces were directed towards me.

"Then I heard voices approaching me. Coming through the bushes by the White Sphinx were the heads and shoulders of men running. One of these emerged in a pathway leading straight to the little lawn upon which I stood with my machine. He was a slight creature—perhaps four feet high—clad in a purple tunic, girdled at the waist with a leather belt. Sandals or buskins—I could not clearly distinguish which—were on his feet; his legs were bare to the knees, and his head was bare. Noticing that, I noticed for the first time how warm the air was.

"He struck me as being a very beautiful and graceful creature, but indescribably frail. His flushed face reminded me of the more beautiful kind of consumptive—that hectic beauty of which we used to hear so much. At the sight of him I suddenly regained confidence. I took my hands from the machine.

§ 4

"In another moment we were standing face to face, I and this fragile thing out of futurity. He came straight up to me and laughed into my eyes. The absence from his bearing of any sign of fear struck me at once. Then he turned to the two others who were following him and spoke to them in a strange and very sweet and liquid tongue.

"There were others coming, and presently a little group of perhaps eight or ten of these exquisite creatures were about me. One of them addressed me. It came into my head, oddly enough, that my voice was too harsh and deep for them. So I shook my head, and, pointing to my ears, shook it again. He came a step forward, hesitated, and then touched my hand.

Then I felt other soft little tentacles upon my back and shoulders. They wanted to make sure I was real. There was nothing in this at all alarming. Indeed, there was something in these pretty little people that inspired confidence—a graceful gentleness, a certain childlike ease. And besides, they looked so frail that I could fancy myself flinging the whole dozen of them about like nine-pins. But I made a sudden motion to warn them when I saw their little pink hands feeling at the Time Machine. Happily then, when it was not too late, I thought of a danger I had hitherto forgotten, and reaching over the bars of the machine I unscrewed the little levers that would set it in motion, and put these in my pocket. Then I turned again to see what I could do in the way of communication.

"And then, looking more nearly into their features, I saw some further peculiarities in their Dresden-china type of prettiness. Their hair, which was uniformly curly, came to a sharp end at the neck and cheek; there was not the faintest suggestion of it on the face, and their ears were singularly minute. The mouths were small, with bright red, rather thin lips, and the little chins ran to a point. The eyes were large and mild; and—this may seem egotism on my part—I fancied even then that there was a certain lack of the interest I might have expected in them.

"As they made no effort to communicate with me, but simply stood round me smiling and speaking in soft cooing notes to each other, I began the conversation. I pointed to the Time Machine and to myself. Then hesitating for a moment how to express time, I pointed to the sun. At once a quaintly pretty little figure in chequered purple and white followed my gesture, and then astonished me by imitating the sound of thunder.

"For a moment I was staggered, though the import of his gesture was plain enough. The question had come into my mind abruptly: were these creatures fools? You may hardly understand how it took me. You see I had always anticipated that the people of the year Eight Hundred and Two Thousand odd would be incredibly in front of us in knowledge, art,

everything. Then one of them suddenly asked me a question that showed him to be on the intellectual level of one of our five-year-old children—asked me, in fact, if I had come from the sun in a thunderstorm! It let loose the judgment I had suspended upon their clothes, their frail light limbs, and fragile features. A flow of disappointment rushed across my mind. For a moment I felt that I had built the Time Machine in vain.

"I nodded, pointed to the sun, and gave them such a vivid rendering of a thunderclap as startled them. They all withdrew a pace or so and bowed. Then came one laughing towards me, carrying a chain of beautiful flowers altogether new to me, and put it about my neck. The idea was received with melodious applause; and presently they were all running to and fro for flowers, and laughingly flinging them upon me until I was almost smothered with blossom. You who have never seen the like can scarcely imagine what delicate and wonderful flowers countless years of culture had created. Then someone suggested that their plaything should be exhibited in the nearest building, and so I was led past the sphinx of white marble, which had seemed to watch me all the while with a smile at my astonishment, towards a vast grey edifice of fretted stone. As I went with them the memory of my confident anticipations of a profoundly grave and intellectual posterity came, with irresistible merriment, to my mind.

"The building had a huge entry, and was altogether of colossal dimensions. I was naturally most occupied with the growing crowd of little people, and with the big open portals that yawned before me shadowy and mysterious. My general impression of the world I saw over their heads was of a tangled waste of beautiful bushes and flowers, a long-neglected and yet weedless garden. I saw a number of tall spikes of strange white flowers, measuring a foot perhaps across the spread of the waxen petals. They grew scattered, as if wild, among the variegated shrubs, but, as I say, I did not examine them closely at this time. The Time Machine was left deserted on the turf among the rhododendrons.

"The arch of the doorway was richly carved, but naturally I did not observe the carving very narrowly, though I fancied I saw suggestions of old Phœnician decorations as I passed through, and it struck me that they were very badly broken and weather-worn. Several more brightly clad people met me in the doorway, and so we entered, I, dressed in dingy nineteenth-century garments, looking grotesque enough, garlanded with flowers, and surrounded by an eddying mass of bright, soft-coloured robes and shining white limbs, in a melodious whirl of laughter and laughing speech.

"The big doorway opened into a proportionately great hall hung with brown. The roof was in shadow, and the windows, partially glazed with coloured glass and partially unglazed, admitted a tempered light. The floor was made up of huge blocks of some very hard white metal, not plates nor slabs,—blocks, and it was so much worn, as I judged by the going to and fro of past generations, as to be deeply channelled along the more frequented ways. Transverse to the length were innumerable tables made of slabs of polished stone, raised perhaps a foot from the floor, and upon these were heaps of fruits. Some I recognised as a kind of hypertrophied raspberry and orange, but for the most part they were strange.

"Between the tables was scattered a great number of cushions. Upon these my conductors seated themselves, signing for me to do likewise. With a pretty absence of ceremony they began to eat the fruit with their hands, flinging peel and stalks and so forth into the round openings in the sides of the tables. I was not loth to follow their example, for I felt thirsty and hungry. As I did so I surveyed the hall at my leisure.

"And perhaps the thing that struck me most was its dilapidated look. The stained-glass windows, which displayed only a geometrical pattern, were broken in many places, and the curtains that hung across the lower end were thick with dust. And it caught my eye that the corner of the marble table near me was fractured. Nevertheless, the general effect was extremely rich and picturesque. There were, perhaps, a couple of hundred people dining in the hall, and most of them, seated as near to

me as they could come, were watching me with interest, their little eyes shining over the fruit they were eating. All were clad in the same soft, and yet strong, silky material.

"Fruit, by the bye, was all their diet. These people of the remote future were strict vegetarians, and while I was with them, in spite of some carnal cravings, I had to be frugivorous also. Indeed, I found afterwards that horses, cattle, sheep, dogs, had followed the Ichthyosaurus into extinction. But the fruits were very delightful; one, in particular, that seemed to be in season all the time I was there—a floury thing in a three-sided husk—was especially good, and I made it my staple. At first I was puzzled by all these strange fruits, and by the strange flowers I saw, but later I began to perceive their import.

"However, I am telling you of my fruit dinner in the distant future now. So soon as my appetite was a little checked, I determined to make a resolute attempt to learn the speech of these new men of mine. Clearly that was the next thing to do. The fruits seemed a convenient thing to begin upon, and holding one of these up I began a series of interrogative sounds and gestures. I had some considerable difficulty in conveying my meaning. At first my efforts met with a stare of surprise or inextinguishable laughter, but presently a fair-haired little creature seemed to grasp my intention and repeated a name. They had to chatter and explain the business at great length to each other, and my first attempts to make the exquisite little sounds of their language caused an immense amount of amusement. However, I felt like a schoolmaster amidst children, and persisted, and presently I had a score of noun substantives at least at my command; and then I got to demonstrative pronouns, and even the verb 'to eat.' But it was slow work, and the little people soon tired and wanted to get away from my interrogations, so I determined, rather of necessity, to let them give their lessons in little doses when they felt inclined. And very little doses I found they were before long, for I never met people more indolent or more easily fatigued.

"A queer thing I soon discovered about my little hosts,

and that was their lack of interest. They would come to me with eager cries of astonishment, like children, but like children they would soon stop examining me and wander away after some other toy. The dinner and my conversational beginnings ended, I noted for the first time that almost all those who had surrounded me at first were gone. It is odd, too, how speedily I came to disregard these little people. I went out through the portal into the sunlit world again so soon as my hunger was satisfied. I was continually meeting more of these men of the future, who would follow me a little distance, chatter and laugh about me, and, having smiled and gesticulated in a friendly way, leave me again to my own devices.

"The calm of evening was upon the world as I emerged from the great hall, and the scene was lit by the warm glow of the setting sun. At first things were very confusing. Everything was so entirely different from the world I had known—even the flowers. The big building I had left was situate on the slope of a broad river valley, but the Thames had shifted perhaps a mile from its present position. I resolved to mount to the summit of a crest, perhaps a mile and a half away, from which I could get a wider view of this our planet in the year Eight Hundred and Two Thousand Seven Hundred and One A.D. For that, I should explain, was the date the little dials of my machine recorded.

"As I walked I was watchful for every impression that could possibly help to explain the condition of ruinous splendour in which I found the world—for ruinous it was. A little way up the hill, for instance, was a great heap of granite, bound together by masses of aluminium, a vast labyrinth of precipitous walls and crumbled heaps, amidst which were thick heaps of very beautiful pagoda-like plants—nettles possibly—but wonderfully tinted with brown about the leaves, and incapable of stinging. It was evidently the derelict remains of some vast structure, to what end built I could not determine. It was here that I was destined, at a later date, to have a very strange experience—the first intimation of a still stranger discovery—but of that I will speak in its proper place.

"Looking round with a sudden thought, from a terrace on which I rested for a while, I realised that there were no small houses to be seen. Apparently the single house, and possibly even the household, had vanished. Here and there among the greenery were palace-like buildings, but the house and the cottage, which form such characteristic features of our own English landscape, had disappeared.

"'Communism,' said I to myself.

"And on the heels of that came another thought. I looked at the half-dozen little figures that were following me. Then, in a flash, I perceived that all had the same form of costume, the same soft hairless visage, and the same girlish rotundity of limb. It may seem strange, perhaps, that I had not noticed this before. But everything was so strange. Now, I saw the fact plainly enough. In costume, and in all the differences of texture and bearing that now mark off the sexes from each other, these people of the future were alike. And the children seemed to my eyes to be but the miniatures of their parents. I judged, then, that the children of that time were extremely precocious, physically at least, and I found afterwards abundant verification of my opinion.

"Seeing the ease and security in which these people were living, I felt that this close resemblance of the sexes was after all what one would expect; for the strength of a man and the softness of a woman, the institution of the family, and the differentiation of occupations are mere militant necessities of an age of physical force. Where population is balanced and abundant, much child-bearing becomes an evil rather than a blessing to the State; where violence comes but rarely and offspring are secure, there is less necessity—indeed there is no necessity—for an efficient family, and the specialisation of the sexes with reference to their children's needs disappears. We see some beginnings of this even in our own time, and in this future age it was complete. This, I must remind you, was my speculation at the time. Later, I was to appreciate how far it fell short of the reality.

"While I was musing upon these things, my attention was attracted by a pretty little structure, like a well under a

cupola. I thought in a transitory way of the oddness of wells still existing, and then resumed the thread of my speculations. There were no large buildings towards the top of the hill, and as my walking powers were evidently miraculous, I was presently left alone for the first time. With a strange sense of freedom and adventure I pushed on up to the crest.

"There I found a seat of some yellow metal that I did not recognise, corroded in places with a kind of pinkish rust and half smothered in soft moss, the arm rests cast and filed into the resemblance of griffins' heads. I sat down on it, and I surveyed the broad view of our old world under the sunset of that long day. It was as sweet and fair a view as I have ever seen. The sun had already gone below the horizon and the west was flaming gold, touched with some horizontal bars of purple and crimson. Below was the valley of the Thames, in which the river lay like a band of burnished steel. I have already spoken of the great palaces dotted about among the variegated greenery, some in ruins and some still occupied. Here and there rose a white or silvery figure in the waste garden of the earth, here and there came the sharp vertical line of some cupola or obelisk. There were no hedges, no signs of proprietary rights, no evidences of agriculture; the whole earth had become a garden.

"So watching, I began to put my interpretation upon the things I had seen, and as it shaped itself to me that evening, my interpretation was something in this way. (Afterwards I found I had got only a half-truth—or only a glimpse of one facet of the truth.)

"It seemed to me that I had happened upon humanity upon the wane. The ruddy sunset set me thinking of the sunset of mankind. For the first time I began to realise an odd consequence of the social effort in which we are at present engaged. And yet, come to think, it is a logical consequence enough. Strength is the outcome of need; security sets a premium on feebleness. The work of ameliorating the conditions of life—the true civilising process that makes life more and more secure—had gone steadily on to a climax. One triumph of a united humanity over Nature had followed an-

other. Things that are now mere dreams had become projects deliberately put in hand and carried forward. And the harvest was what I saw!

"After all, the sanitation and the agriculture of to-day are still in the rudimentary stage. The science of our time has attacked but a little department of the field of human disease, but, even so, it spreads its operations very steadily and persistently. Our agriculture and horticulture destroy a weed just here and there and cultivate perhaps a score or so of wholesome plants, leaving the greater number to fight out a balance as they can. We improve our favourite plants and animals—and how few they are—gradually by selective breeding; now a new and better peach, now a seedless grape, now a sweeter and larger flower, now a more convenient breed of cattle. We improve them gradually, because our ideals are vague and tentative, and our knowledge is very limited; because Nature, too, is shy and slow in our clumsy hands. Some day all this will be better organised, and still better. That is the drift of the current in spite of the eddies. The whole world will be intelligent, educated, and coöperating; things will move faster and faster towards the subjugation of Nature. In the end, wisely and carefully we shall readjust the balance of animal and vegetable life to suit our human needs.

"This adjustment, I say, must have been done, and done well; done indeed for all Time, in the space of Time across which my machine had leaped. The air was free from gnats, the earth from weeds or fungi; everywhere were fruits and sweet and delightful flowers; brilliant butterflies flew hither and thither. The ideal of preventive medicine was attained. Diseases had been stamped out. I saw no evidence of any contagious diseases during all my stay. And I shall have to tell you later that even the processes of putrefaction and decay had been profoundly affected by these changes.

"Social triumphs, too, had been effected. I saw mankind housed in splendid shelters, gloriously clothed, and as yet I had found them engaged in no toil. There were no signs of struggle, neither social nor economical struggle. The shop, the

advertisement, traffic, all that commerce which constitutes the body of our world, was gone. It was natural on that golden evening that I should jump at the idea of a social paradise. The difficulty of increasing population had been met, I guessed, and population had ceased to increase.

"But with this change in condition come inevitably adaptations to the change. What, unless biological science is a mass of errors, is the cause of human intelligence and vigour? Hardship and freedom: conditions under which the active, strong, and subtle survive and the weaker go to the wall; conditions that put a premium upon the loyal alliance of capable men, upon self-restraint, patience, and decision. And the institution of the family, and the emotions that arise therein, the fierce jealousy, the tenderness for offspring, parental self-devotion, all found their justification and support in the imminent dangers of the young. *Now*, where are these imminent dangers? There is a sentiment arising, and it will grow, against connubial jealousy, against fierce maternity, against passion of all sorts; unnecessary things now, and things that make us uncomfortable, savage survivals, discords in a refined and pleasant life.

"I thought of the physical slightness of the people, their lack of intelligence, and those big abundant ruins, and it strengthened my belief in a perfect conquest of Nature. For after the battle comes Quiet. Humanity has been strong, energetic, and intelligent, and had used all its abundant vitality to alter the conditions under which it lived. And now came the reaction of the altered conditions.

"Under the new conditions of perfect comfort and security that restless energy, that with us is strength, would become weakness. Even in our own time certain tendencies and desires, once necessary to survival, are a constant source of failure. Physical courage and the love of battle, for instance, are no great help—may even be hindrances—to a civilised man. And in a state of physical balance and security, power, intellectual as well as physical, would be out of place. For countless years I judged there had been no danger of war or solitary violence, no danger from wild beasts, no wasting

disease to require strength of constitution, no need of toil. For such a life, what we should call the weak are as well equipped as the strong, are indeed no longer weak. Better equipped indeed they are, for the strong would be fretted by an energy for which there was no outlet. No doubt the exquisite beauty of the buildings I saw was the outcome of the last surgings of the now purposeless energy of mankind before it settled down into perfect harmony with the conditions under which it lived—the flourish of that triumph which began the last great peace. This has ever been the fate of energy in security; it takes to art and to eroticism, and then come languor and decay.

"Even this artistic impetus would at last die away—had almost died in the Time I saw. To adorn themselves with flowers, to dance, to sing in the sunlight; so much was left of the artistic spirit, and no more. Even that would fade in the end into a contented inactivity. We are kept keen on the grindstone of pain and necessity, and, it seemed to me, that here was that hateful grindstone broken at last!

"As I stood there in the gathering dark I thought that in this simple explanation I had mastered the problem of the world—mastered the whole secret of these delicious people. Possibly the checks they had devised for the increase of population had succeeded too well, and their numbers had rather diminished than kept stationary. That would account for the abandoned ruins. Very simple was my explanation, and plausible enough—as most wrong theories are!

§ 5

"As I stood there musing over this too perfect triumph of man, the full moon, yellow and gibbous, came up out of an overflow of silver light in the northeast. The bright little figures ceased to move about below, a noiseless owl flitted by, and I shivered with the chill of the night. I determined to descend and find where I could sleep.

"I looked for the building I knew. Then my eye travelled

along to the figure of the White Sphinx upon the pedestal of bronze, growing distinct as the light of the rising moon grew brighter. I could see the silver birch against it. There was the tangle of rhododendron bushes, black in the pale light, and there was the little lawn. I looked at the lawn again. A queer doubt chilled my complacency. 'No,' said I stoutly to myself, 'that was not the lawn.'

"But it *was* the lawn. For the white leprous face of the sphinx was towards it. Can you imagine what I felt as this conviction came home to me? But you cannot. The Time Machine was gone!

"At once, like a lash across the face, came the possibility of losing my own age, of being left helpless in this strange new world. The bare thought of it was an actual physical sensation. I could feel it grip me at the throat and stop my breathing. In another moment I was in a passion of fear and running with great leaping strides down the slope. Once I fell headlong and cut my face; I lost no time in stanching the blood, but jumped up and ran on, with a warm trickle down my cheek and chin. All the time I ran I was saying to myself, 'They have moved it a little, pushed it under the bushes out of the way.' Nevertheless, I ran with all my might. All the time, with the certainty that sometimes comes with excessive dread, I knew that such assurance was folly, knew instinctively that the machine was removed out of my reach. My breath came with pain. I suppose I covered the whole distance from the hill crest to the little lawn, two miles, perhaps, in ten minutes. And I am not a young man. I cursed aloud, as I ran, at my confident folly in leaving the machine, wasting good breath thereby. I cried aloud, and none answered. Not a creature seemed to be stirring in that moonlit world.

"When I reached the lawn my worst fears were realised. Not a trace of the thing was to be seen. I felt faint and cold when I faced the empty space among the black tangle of bushes. I ran round it furiously, as if the thing might be hidden in a corner, and then stopped abruptly, with my hands

clutching my hair. Above me towered the sphinx, upon the bronze pedestal, white, shining, leprous, in the light of the rising moon. It seemed to smile in mockery of my dismay.

"I might have consoled myself by imagining the little people had put the mechanism in some shelter for me, had I not felt assured of their physical and intellectual inadequacy. That is what dismayed me: the sense of some hitherto unsuspected power, through whose intervention my invention had vanished. Yet, of one thing I felt assured: unless some other age had produced its exact duplicate, the machine could not have moved in time. The attachment of the levers—I will show you the method later—prevented any one from tampering with it in that way when they were removed. It had moved, and was hid, only in space. But then, where could it be?

"I think I must have had a kind of frenzy. I remember running violently in and out among the moonlit bushes all round the sphinx, and startling some white animal that, in the dim light, I took for a small deer. I remember, too, late that night, beating the bushes with my clenched fists until my knuckles were gashed and bleeding from the broken twigs. Then, sobbing and raving in my anguish of mind, I went down to the great building of stone. The big hall was dark, silent, and deserted. I slipped on the uneven floor, and fell over one of the malachite tables, almost breaking my shin. I lit a match and went on past the dusty curtains, of which I have told you.

"There I found a second great hall covered with cushions, upon which, perhaps, a score or so of the little people were sleeping. I have no doubt they found my second appearance strange enough, coming suddenly out of the quiet darkness with inarticulate noises and the splutter and flare of a match. For they had forgotten about matches. 'Where is my Time Machine?' I began, bawling like an angry child, laying hands upon them and shaking them up together. It must have been very queer to them. Some laughed, most of them looked sorely frightened. When I saw them standing round me, it came into my head that I was doing as foolish a thing as it was possible

for me to do under the circumstances, in trying to revive the sensation of fear. For, reasoning from their daylight behaviour, I thought that fear must be forgotten.

"Abruptly, I dashed down the match, and, knocking one of the people over in my course, went blundering across the big dining-hall again, out under the moonlight. I heard cries of terror and their little feet running and stumbling this way and that. I do not remember all I did as the moon crept up the sky. I suppose it was the unexpected nature of my loss that maddened me. I felt hopelessly cut off from my own kind —a strange animal in an unknown world. I must have raved to and fro, screaming and crying upon God and Fate. I have a memory of horrible fatigue, as the long night of despair wore away; of looking in this impossible place and that; of groping among moonlit ruins and touching strange creatures in the black shadows; at last, of lying on the ground near the sphinx and weeping with absolute wretchedness. I had nothing left but misery. Then I slept, and when I woke again it was full day, and a couple of sparrows were hopping round me on the turf within reach of my arm.

"I sat up in the freshness of the morning, trying to remember how I had got there, and why I had such a profound sense of desertion and despair. Then things came clear in my mind. With the plain, reasonable daylight, I could look my circumstances fairly in the face. I saw the wild folly of my frenzy overnight, and I could reason with myself. 'Suppose the worst?' I said. 'Suppose the machine altogether lost—perhaps destroyed? It behoves me to be calm and patient, to learn the way of the people, to get a clear idea of the method of my loss, and the means of getting materials and tools; so that in the end, perhaps, I may make another.' That would be my only hope, a poor hope perhaps, but better than despair. And, after all, it was a beautiful and curious world.

"But probably the machine had only been taken away. Still, I must be calm and patient, find its hiding place, and recover it by force or cunning. And with that I scrambled to my feet and looked about me, wondering where I could bathe. I felt weary, stiff, and travel-soiled. The freshness of the

morning made me desire an equal freshness. I had exhausted my emotion. Indeed, as I went about my business, I found myself wondering at my intense excitement overnight. I made a careful examination of the ground about the little lawn. I wasted some time in futile questionings, conveyed, as well as I was able, to such of the little people as came by. They all failed to understand my gestures; some were simply stolid, some thought it was a jest and laughed at me. I had the hardest task in the world to keep my hands off their pretty laughing faces. It was a foolish impulse, but the devil begotten of fear and blind anger was ill curbed and still eager to take advantage of my perplexity. The turf gave better counsel. I found a groove ripped in it, about midway between the pedestal of the sphinx and the marks of my feet where, on arrival, I had struggled with the overturned machine. There were other signs of removal about, with queer narrow footprints like those I could imagine made by a sloth. This directed my closer attention to the pedestal. It was, as I think I have said, of bronze. It was not a mere block, but highly decorated with deep framed panels on either side. I went and rapped at these. The pedestal was hollow. Examining the panels with care I found them discontinuous with the frames. There were no handles or keyholes, but possibly the panels, if they were doors, as I supposed, opened from within. One thing was clear enough to my mind. It took no very great mental effort to infer that my Time Machine was inside that pedestal. But how it got there was a different problem.

"I saw the heads of two orange-clad people coming through the bushes and under some blossom-covered apple-trees towards me. I turned smiling to them and beckoned them to me. They came, and then, pointing to the bronze pedestal, I tried to intimate my wish to open it. But at my first gesture towards this they behaved very oddly. I don't know how to convey their expression to you. Suppose you were to use a grossly improper gesture to a delicate-minded woman—it is how she would look. They went off as if they had received the last possible insult. I tried a sweet-looking little chap in white next, with exactly the same result. Somehow, his man-

ner made me feel ashamed of myself. But, as you know, I wanted the Time Machine, and I tried him once more. As he turned off, like the others, my temper got the better of me. In three strides I was after him, had him by the loose part of his robe round the neck, and began dragging him towards the sphinx. Then I saw the horror and repugnance of his face, and all of a sudden I let him go.

"But I was not beaten yet. I banged with my fist at the bronze panels. I thought I heard something stir inside—to be explicit, I thought I heard a sound like a chuckle—but I must have been mistaken. Then I got a big pebble from the river, and came and hammered till I had flattened a coil in the decorations, and the verdigris came off in powdery flakes. The delicate little people must have heard me hammering in gusty outbreaks a mile away on either hand, but nothing came of it. I saw a crowd of them upon the slopes, looking furtively at me. At last, hot and tired, I sat down to watch the place. But I was too restless to watch long; I am too Occidental for a long vigil. I could work at a problem for years, but to wait inactive for twenty-four hours—that is another matter.

"I got up after a time, and began walking aimlessly through the bushes towards the hill again. 'Patience,' said I to myself. 'If you want your machine again you must leave that sphinx alone. If they mean to take your machine away, it's little good your wrecking their bronze panels, and if they don't, you will get it back as soon as you can ask for it. To sit among all these unknown things before a puzzle like that is hopeless. That way lies monomania. Face this world. Learn its ways, watch it, be careful of too hasty guesses at its meaning. In the end you will find clues to it all.' Then suddenly the humour of the situation came into my mind: the thought of the years I had spent in study and toil to get into the future age, and now my passion of anxiety to get out of it. I had made myself the most complicated and the most hopeless trap that ever a man devised. Although it was at my own expense, I could not help myself. I laughed aloud.

"Going through the big palace, it seemed to me that the

little people avoided me. It may have been my fancy, or it may have had something to do with my hammering at the gates of bronze. Yet I felt tolerably sure of the avoidance. I was careful, however, to show no concern and to abstain from any pursuit of them, and in the course of a day or two things got back to the old footing. I made what progress I could in the language, and in addition I pushed my explorations here and there. Either I missed some subtle point, or their language was excessively simple—almost exclusively composed of concrete substantives and verbs. There seemed to be few, if any, abstract terms, or little use of figurative language. Their sentences were usually simple and of two words, and I failed to convey or understand any but the simplest propositions. I determined to put the thought of my Time Machine and the mystery of the bronze doors under the sphinx as much as possible in a corner of memory, until my growing knowledge would lead me back to them in a natural way. Yet a certain feeling, you may understand, tethered me in a circle of a few miles round the point of my arrival.

"So far as I could see, all the world displayed the same exuberant richness as the Thames valley. From every hill I climbed I saw the same abundance of splendid buildings, endlessly varied in material and style, the same clustering thickets of evergreens, the same blossom-laden trees and tree-ferns. Here and there water shone like silver, and beyond, the land rose into blue undulating hills, and so faded into the serenity of the sky. A peculiar feature, which presently attracted my attention, was the presence of certain circular wells, several, as it seemed to me, of a very great depth. One lay by the path up the hill, which I had followed during my first walk. Like the others, it was rimmed with bronze, curiously wrought, and protected by a little cupola from the rain. Sitting by the side of these wells, and peering down into the shafted darkness, I could see no gleam of water, nor could I start any reflection with a lighted match. But in all of them I heard a certain sound: a thud—thud—thud, like the beating of some big engine; and I discovered, from the flaring of my matches, that a steady current of air set down the shafts.

Further, I threw a scrap of paper into the throat of one, and, instead of fluttering slowly down, it was at once sucked swiftly out of sight.

"After a time, too, I came to connect these wells with tall towers standing here and there upon the slopes; for above them there was often just such a flicker in the air as one sees on a hot day above a sun-scorched beach. Putting things together, I reached a strong suggestion of an extensive system of subterranean ventilation, whose true import it was difficult to imagine. I was at first inclined to associate it with the sanitary apparatus of these people. It was an obvious conclusion, but it was absolutely wrong.

"And here I must admit that I learned very little of drains and bells and modes of conveyance, and the like conveniences during my time in this real future. In some of these visions of Utopias and coming times which I have read, there is a vast amount of detail about building, and social arrangements, and so forth. But while such details are easy enough to obtain when the whole world is contained in one's imagination, they are altogether inaccessible to a real traveller amid such realities as I found here. Conceive the tale of London which a negro, fresh from Central Africa, would take back to his tribe! What would he know of railway companies, of social movements, of telephone and telegraph wires, of the Parcels Delivery Company, and postal orders and the like? Yet we, at least, should be willing enough to explain these things to him! And even of what he knew, how much could he make his untravelled friend either apprehend or believe? Then, think how narrow the gap between a negro and a white man of our own times, and how wide the interval between myself and these of the Golden Age! I was sensible of much which was unseen, and which contributed to my comfort; but save for a general impression of automatic organisation, I fear I can convey very little of the difference to your mind.

"In the matter of sepulture, for instance, I could see no signs of crematoria nor anything suggestive of tombs. But it occurred to me that, possibly, there might be cemeteries (or crematoria) somewhere beyond the range of my explorings.

This, again, was a question I deliberately put to myself, and my curiosity was at first entirely defeated upon the point. The thing puzzled me, and I was led to make a further remark, which puzzled me still more: that aged and infirm among this people there were none.

"I must confess that my satisfaction with my first theories of an automatic civilisation and a decadent humanity did not long endure. Yet I could think of no other. Let me put my difficulties. The several big palaces I had explored were mere living places, great dining-halls and sleeping apartments. I could find no machinery, no appliances of any kind. Yet these people were clothed in pleasant fabrics that must at times need renewal, and their sandals, though undecorated, were fairly complex specimens of metalwork. Somehow such things must be made. And the little people displayed no vestige of a creative tendency. There were no shops, no workshops, no sign of importations among them. They spent all their time in playing gently, in bathing in the river, in making love in a half-playful fashion, in eating fruit and sleeping. I could not see how things were kept going.

"Then, again, about the Time Machine: something, I knew not what, had taken it into the hollow pedestal of the White Sphinx. *Why?* For the life of me I could not imagine. Those waterless wells, too, those flickering pillars. I felt I lacked a clue. I felt—how shall I put it? Suppose you found an inscription, with sentences here and there in excellent plain English, and interpolated therewith, others made up of words, of letters even, absolutely unknown to you? Well, on the third day of my visit, that was how the world of Eight Hundred and Two Thousand Seven Hundred and One presented itself to me!

"That day, too, I made a friend—of a sort. It happened that, as I was watching some of the little people bathing in a shallow, one of them was seized with cramp and began drifting downstream. The main current ran rather swiftly, but not too strongly for even a moderate swimmer. It will give you an idea, therefore, of the strange deficiency in these creatures, when I tell you that none made the slightest at-

tempt to rescue the weakly crying little thing which was drowning before their eyes. When I realised this, I hurriedly slipped off my clothes, and, wading in at a point lower down, I caught the poor mite and drew her safe to land. A little rubbing of the limbs soon brought her round, and I had the satisfaction of seeing she was all right before I left her. I had got to such a low estimate of her kind that I did not expect any gratitude from her. In that, however, I was wrong.

"This happened in the morning. In the afternoon I met my little woman, as I believe it was, as I was returning towards my centre from an exploration, and she received me with cries of delight and presented me with a big garland of flowers—evidently made for me and me alone. The thing took my imagination. Very possibly I had been feeling desolate. At any rate I did my best to display my appreciation of the gift. We were soon seated together in a little stone arbour, engaged in conversation, chiefly of smiles. The creature's friendliness affected me exactly as a child's might have done. We passed each other flowers, and she kissed my hands. I did the same to hers. Then I tried talk, and found that her name was Weena, which, though I don't know what it meant, somehow seemed appropriate enough. That was the beginning of a queer friendship which lasted a week, and ended—as I will tell you!

"She was exactly like a child. She wanted to be with me always. She tried to follow me everywhere, and my next journey out and about it went to my heart to tire her down, and leave her at last, exhausted and calling after me rather plaintively. But the problems of the world had to be mastered. I had not, I said to myself, come into the future to carry on a miniature flirtation. Yet her distress when I left her was very great, her expostulations at the parting were sometimes frantic, and I think, altogether, I had as much trouble as comfort from her devotion. Nevertheless she was, somehow, a very great comfort. I thought it was mere childish affection that made her cling to me. Until it was too late, I did not clearly know what I had inflicted upon her when I left her. Nor until it was too late did I clearly understand

what she was to me. For, by merely seeming fond of me, and showing in her weak, futile way that she cared for me, the little doll of a creature presently gave my return to the neighbourhood of the White Sphinx almost the feeling of coming home; and I would watch for her tiny figure of white and gold so soon as I came over the hill.

"It was from her, too, that I learned that fear had not yet left the world. She was fearless enough in the daylight, and she had the oddest confidence in me; for once, in a foolish moment, I made threatening grimaces at her, and she simply laughed at them. But she dreaded the dark, dreaded shadows, dreaded black things. Darkness to her was the one thing dreadful. It was a singularly passionate emotion, and it set me thinking and observing. I discovered then, among other things, that these little people gathered into the great houses after dark, and slept in droves. To enter upon them without a light was to put them into a tumult of apprehension. I never found one out of doors, or one sleeping alone within doors, after dark. Yet I was still such a blockhead that I missed the lesson of that fear, and in spite of Weena's distress I insisted upon sleeping away from these slumbering multitudes.

"It troubled her greatly, but in the end her odd affection for me triumphed, and for five of the nights of our acquaintance, including the last night of all, she slept with her head pillowed on my arm. But my story slips away from me as I speak of her. It must have been the night before her rescue that I was awakened about dawn. I had been restless, dreaming most disagreeably that I was drowned, and that sea-anemones were feeling over my face with their soft palps. I woke with a start, and with an odd fancy that some greyish animal had just rushed out of the chamber. I tried to get to sleep again, but I felt restless and uncomfortable. It was that dim grey hour when things are just creeping out of darkness, when everything is colourless and clear cut, and yet unreal. I got up, and went down into the great hall, and so out upon the flagstones in front of the palace. I thought I would make a virtue of necessity, and see the sunrise.

"The moon was setting, and the dying moonlight and the

first pallor of dawn were mingled in a ghastly half-light. The bushes were inky black, the ground a sombre grey, the sky colourless and cheerless. And up the hill I thought I could see ghosts. Three several times, as I scanned the slope, I saw white figures. Twice I fancied I saw a solitary white, ape-like creature running rather quickly up the hill, and once near the ruins I saw a leash of them carrying some dark body. They moved hastily. I did not see what became of them. It seemed that they vanished among the bushes. The dawn was still indistinct, you must understand. I was feeling that chill, uncertain, early-morning feeling you may have known. I doubted my eyes.

"As the eastern sky grew brighter, and the light of the day came on and its vivid colouring returned upon the world once more, I scanned the view keenly. But I saw no vestige of my white figures. They were mere creatures of the half-light. 'They must have been ghosts,' I said; 'I wonder whence they dated.' For a queer notion of Grant Allen's came into my head, and amused me. If each generation die and leave ghosts, he argued, the world at last will get overcrowded with them. On that theory they would have grown innumerable some Eight Hundred Thousand Years hence, and it was no great wonder to see four at once. But the jest was unsatisfying, and I was thinking of these figures all the morning, until Weena's rescue drove them out of my head. I associated them in some indefinite way with the white animal I had startled in my first passionate search for the Time Machine. But Weena was a pleasant substitute. Yet all the same, they were soon destined to take far deadlier possession of my mind.

"I think I have said how much hotter than our own was the weather of this Golden Age. I cannot account for it. It may be that the sun was hotter, or the earth nearer the sun. It is usual to assume that the sun will go on cooling steadily in the future. But people, unfamiliar with such speculations as those of the younger Darwin, forget that the planets must ultimately fall back one by one into the parent body. As these catastrophes occur, the sun will blaze with renewed energy; and it may be that some inner planet had suffered this fate.

Whatever the reason, the fact remains that the sun was very much hotter than we know it.

"Well, one very hot morning—my fourth, I think—as I was seeking shelter from the heat and glare in a colossal ruin near the great house where I slept and fed, there happened this strange thing: Clambering among these heaps of masonry, I found a narrow gallery, whose end and side windows were blocked by fallen masses of stone. By contrast with the brilliancy outside, it seemed at first impenetrably dark to me. I entered it groping, for the change from light to blackness made spots of colour swim before me. Suddenly I halted spellbound. A pair of eyes, luminous by reflection against the daylight without, was watching me out of the darkness.

"The old instinctive dread of wild beasts came upon me. I clenched my hands and steadfastly looked into the glaring eyeballs. I was afraid to turn. Then the thought of the absolute security in which humanity appeared to be living came to my mind. And then I remembered that strange terror of the dark. Overcoming my fear to some extent, I advanced a step and spoke. I will admit that my voice was harsh and ill-controlled. I put out my hand and touched something soft. At once the eyes darted sideways, and something white ran past me. I turned with my heart in my mouth, and saw a queer little ape-like figure, its head held down in a peculiar manner, running across the sunlit space behind me. It blundered against a block of granite, staggered aside, and in a moment was hidden in a black shadow beneath another pile of ruined masonry.

"My impression of it is, of course, imperfect; but I know it was a dull white, and had strange large greyish-red eyes; also that there was flaxen hair on its head and down its back. But, as I say, it went too fast for me to see distinctly. I cannot even say whether it ran on all-fours, or only with its forearms held very low. After an instant's pause I followed it into the second heap of ruins. I could not find it at first; but, after a time in the profound obscurity, I came upon one of those round well-like openings of which I have told you, half closed by a fallen pillar. A sudden thought came to me. Could this Thing have

vanished down the shaft? I lit a match, and, looking down, I saw a small, white, moving creature, with large bright eyes which regarded me steadfastly as it retreated. It made me shudder. It was so like a human spider! It was clambering down the wall, and now I saw for the first time a number of metal foot and hand rests forming a kind of ladder down the shaft. Then the light burned my fingers and fell out of my hand, going out as it dropped, and when I had lit another the little monster had disappeared.

"I do not know how long I sat peering down that well. It was not for some time that I could succeed in persuading myself that the thing I had seen was human. But, gradually, the truth dawned on me: that Man had not remained one species, but had differentiated into two distinct animals: that my graceful children of the Upper World were not the sole descendants of our generation, but that this bleached, obscene, nocturnal Thing, which had flashed before me, was also heir to all the ages.

"I thought of the flickering pillars and of my theory of an underground ventilation. I began to suspect their true import. And what, I wondered, was this Lemur doing in my scheme of a perfectly balanced organisation? How was it related to the indolent serenity of the beautiful Upper-worlders? And what was hidden down there at the foot of that shaft? I sat upon the edge of the well telling myself that, at any rate, there was nothing to fear, and that there I must descend for the solution of my difficulties. And withal I was absolutely afraid to go! As I hesitated, two of the beautiful upper-world people came running in their amorous sport across the daylight into the shadow. The male pursued the female, flinging flowers at her as he ran.

"They seemed distressed to find me, my arm against the overturned pillar, peering down the well. Apparently it was considered bad form to remark these apertures; for when I pointed to this one, and tried to frame a question about it in their tongue, they were still more visibly distressed and turned away. But they were interested by my matches, and I struck some to amuse them. I tried them again about the

well, and again I failed. So presently I left them, meaning to go back to Weena, and see what I could get from her. But my mind was already in revolution; my guesses and impressions were slipping and sliding to a new adjustment. I had now a clue to the import of these wells, to the ventilating towers, to the mystery of the ghosts; to say nothing of a hint at the meaning of the bronze gates and the fate of the Time Machine! And very vaguely there came a suggestion towards the solution of the economic problem that had puzzled me.

"Here was the new view. Plainly, this second species of Man was subterranean. There were three circumstances in particular which made me think that its rare emergence above ground was the outcome of a long-continued underground habit. In the first place, there was the bleached look common in most animals that live largely in the dark—the white fish of the Kentucky caves, for instance. Then, those large eyes, with that capacity for reflecting light, are common features of nocturnal things—witness the owl and the cat. And last of all, that evident confusion in the sunshine, that hasty yet fumbling and awkward flight towards dark shadow, and that peculiar carriage of the head while in the light—all reinforced the theory of an extreme sensitiveness of the retina.

"Beneath my feet, then, the earth must be tunnelled enormously, and these tunnellings were the habitat of the new race. The presence of ventilating-shafts and wells along the hill slopes—everywhere, in fact, except along the river valley—showed how universal were its ramifications. What so natural, then, as to assume that it was in this artificial underworld that such work as was necessary to the comfort of the daylight race was done? The notion was so plausible that I at once accepted it, and went on to assume the how of this splitting of the human species. I dare say you will anticipate the shape of my theory; though, for myself, I very soon felt that it fell far short of the truth.

"At first, proceeding from the problems of our own age, it seemed clear as daylight to me that the gradual widening of the present merely temporary and social difference between the Capitalist and the Labourer was the key to the whole

position. No doubt it will seem grotesque enough to you—and wildly incredible!—and yet even now there are existing circumstances to point that way. There is a tendency to utilise underground space for the less ornamental purposes of civilisation; there is the Metropolitan Railway in London, for instance, there are new electric railways, there are subways, there are underground workrooms and restaurants, and they increase and multiply. Evidently, I thought, this tendency had increased till Industry had gradually lost its birthright in the sky. I mean that it had gone deeper and deeper into larger and ever larger underground factories, spending a still-increasing amount of its time therein, till, in the end——! Even now, does not an East-end worker live in such artificial conditions as practically to be cut off from the natural surface of the earth?

"Again, the exclusive tendency of richer people—due, no doubt, to the increasing refinement of their education, and the widening gulf between them and the rude violence of the poor—is already leading to the closing, in their interest, of considerable portions of the surface of the land. About London, for instance, perhaps half the prettier country is shut in against intrusion. And this same widening gulf—which is due to the length and expense of the higher educational process and the increased facilities for and temptations towards refined habits on the part of the rich—will make that exchange between class and class, that promotion by intermarriage which at present retards the splitting of our species along lines of social stratification, less and less frequent. So, in the end, above ground you must have the Haves, pursuing pleasure and comfort, and beauty, and below ground the Have-nots, the Workers getting continually adapted to the conditions of their labour. Once they were there, they would no doubt have to pay rent, and not a little of it, for the ventilation of their caverns; and if they refused, they would starve or be suffocated for arrears. Such of them as were so constituted as to be miserable and rebellious would die; and, in the end, the balance being permanent, the survivors would become as well adapted to the conditions of underground life,

and as happy in their way, as the Upper-world people were to theirs. As it seemed to me, the refined beauty and the etiolated pallor followed naturally enough.

"The great triumph of Humanity I had dreamed of took a different shape in my mind. It had been no such triumph of moral education and general coöperation as I had imagined. Instead, I saw a real aristocracy, armed with a perfected science and working to a logical conclusion the industrial system of to-day. Its triumph had not been simply a triumph over Nature, but a triumph over Nature and the fellow-man. This, I must warn you, was my theory at the time. I had no convenient cicerone in the pattern of the Utopian books. My explanation may be absolutely wrong. I still think it is the most plausible one. But even on this supposition the balanced civilisation that was at last attained must have long since passed its zenith, and was now far fallen into decay. The too-perfect security of the Upper-worlders had led them to a slow movement of degeneration, to a general dwindling in size, strength, and intelligence. That I could see clearly enough already. What had happened to the Undergrounders I did not yet suspect; but from what I had seen of the Morlocks—that, by the bye, was the name by which these creatures were called—I could imagine that the modification of the human type was even far more profound than among the 'Eloi,' the beautiful race that I already knew.

"Then came troublesome doubts. Why had the Morlocks taken my Time Machine? For I felt sure it was they who had taken it. Why, too, if the Eloi were masters, could they not restore the machine to me? And why were they so terribly afraid of the dark? I proceeded, as I have said, to question Weena about this Underworld, but here again I was disappointed. At first she would not understand my questions, and presently she refused to answer them. She shivered as though the topic was unendurable. And when I pressed her, perhaps a little harshly, she burst into tears. They were the only tears, except my own, I ever saw in that Golden Age. When I saw them I ceased abruptly to trouble about the Morlocks, and was only concerned in banishing these signs of the human in-

heritance from Weena's eyes. And very soon she was smiling and clapping her hands, while I solemnly burned a match.

§ 6

"It may seem odd to you, but it was two days before I could follow up the new-found clue in what was manifestly the proper way. I felt a peculiar shrinking from those pallid bodies. They were just the half-bleached colour of the worms and things one sees preserved in spirit in a zoölogical museum. And they were filthily cold to the touch. Probably my shrinking was largely due to the sympathetic influence of the Eloi, whose disgust of the Morlocks I now began to appreciate.

"The next night I did not sleep well. Probably my health was a little disordered. I was oppressed with perplexity and doubt. Once or twice I had a feeling of intense fear for which I could perceive no definite reason. I remember creeping noiselessly into the great hall where the little people were sleeping in the moonlight—that night Weena was among them—and feeling reassured by their presence. It occurred to me even then, that in the course of a few days the moon must pass through its last quarter, and the nights grow dark, when the appearances of these unpleasant creatures from below, these whitened Lemurs, this new vermin that had replaced the old, might be more abundant. And on both these days I had the restless feeling of one who shirks an inevitable duty. I felt assured that the Time Machine was only to be recovered by boldly penetrating these underground mysteries. Yet I could not face the mystery. If only I had had a companion it would have been different. But I was so horribly alone, and even to clamber down into the darkness of the well appalled me. I don't know if you will understand my feeling, but I never felt quite safe at my back.

"It was this restlessness, this insecurity, perhaps, that drove me further and further afield in my exploring expeditions. Going to the south-westward towards the rising country that is now called Combe Wood, I observed far off, in the direction of nineteenth-century Banstead, a vast green structure, differ-

ent in character from any I had hitherto seen. It was larger than the largest of the palaces or ruins I knew, and the façade had an Oriental look: the face of it having the lustre, as well as the pale-green tint, a kind of bluish-green, of a certain type of Chinese porcelain. This difference in aspect suggested a difference in use, and I was minded to push on and explore. But the day was growing late, and I had come upon the sight of the place after a long and tiring circuit; so I resolved to hold over the adventure for the following day, and I returned to the welcome and the caresses of little Weena. But next morning I perceived clearly enough that my curiosity regarding the Palace of Green Porcelain was a piece of self-deception, to enable me to shirk, by another day, an experience I dreaded. I resolved I would make the descent without further waste of time, and started out in the early morning towards a well near the ruins of granite and aluminium.

"Little Weena ran with me. She danced beside me to the well, but when she saw me lean over the mouth and look downward, she seemed strangely disconcerted. 'Good-bye, little Weena,' I said, kissing her; and then, putting her down, I began to feel over the parapet for the climbing hooks. Rather hastily, I may as well confess, for I feared my courage might leak away! At first she watched me in amazement. Then she gave a most piteous cry, and, running to me, she began to pull at me with her little hands. I think her opposition nerved me rather to proceed. I shook her off, perhaps a little roughly, and in another moment I was in the throat of the well. I saw her agonised face over the parapet, and smiled to reassure her. Then I had to look down at the unstable hooks to which I clung.

"I had to clamber down a shaft of perhaps two hundred yards. The descent was effected by means of metallic bars projecting from the sides of the well, and these being adapted to the needs of a creature much smaller and lighter than myself, I was speedily cramped and fatigued by the descent. And not simply fatigued! One of the bars bent suddenly under my weight, and almost swung me off into the black-

ness beneath. For a moment I hung by one hand, and after that experience I did not dare to rest again. Though my arms and back were presently acutely painful, I went on clambering down the sheer descent with as quick a motion as possible. Glancing upward, I saw the aperture, a small blue disk, in which a star was visible, while little Weena's head showed as a round black projection. The thudding sound of a machine below grew louder and more oppressive. Everything save that little disk above was profoundly dark, and when I looked up again Weena had disappeared.

"I was in an agony of discomfort. I had some thought of trying to go up the shaft again, and leave the Underworld alone. But even while I turned this over in my mind I continued to descend. At last, with intense relief, I saw dimly coming up, a foot to the right of me, a slender loophole in the wall. Swinging myself in, I found it was the aperture of a narrow horizontal tunnel in which I could lie down and rest. It was not too soon. My arms ached, my back was cramped, and I was trembling with the prolonged terror of a fall. Besides this, the unbroken darkness had had a distressing effect upon my eyes. The air was full of the throb and hum of machinery pumping air down the shaft.

"I do not know how long I lay. I was roused by a soft hand touching my face. Starting up in the darkness I snatched at my matches and, hastily striking one, I saw three stooping white creatures similar to the one I had seen above ground in the ruin, hastily retreating before the light. Living, as they did, in what appeared to me impenetrable darkness, their eyes were abnormally large and sensitive, just as are the pupils of the abysmal fishes, and they reflected the light in the same way. I have no doubt they could see me in that rayless obscurity, and they did not seem to have any fear of me apart from the light. But, so soon as I struck a match in order to see them, they fled incontinently, vanishing into dark gutters and tunnels, from which their eyes glared at me in the strangest fashion.

"I tried to call to them, but the language they had was apparently different from that of the Overworld people; so that

I was needs left to my own unaided efforts, and the thought of flight before exploration was even then in my mind. But I said to myself, 'You are in for it now,' and, feeling my way along the tunnel, I found the noise of machinery grow louder. Presently the walls fell away from me, and I came to a large open space, and, striking another match, saw that I had entered a vast arched cavern, which stretched into utter darkness beyond the range of my light. The view I had of it was as much as one could see in the burning of a match.

"Necessarily my memory is vague. Great shapes like big machines rose out of the dimness, and cast grotesque black shadows, in which dim spectral Morlocks sheltered from the glare. The place, by the bye, was very stuffy and oppressive. and the faint halitus of freshly shed blood was in the air. Some way down the central vista was a little table of white metal, laid with what seemed a meal. The Morlocks at any rate were carnivorous! Even at the time, I remember wondering what large animal could have survived to furnish the red joint I saw. It was all very indistinct: the heavy smell, the big unmeaning shapes, the obscene figures lurking in the shadows, and only waiting for the darkness to come at me again! Then the match burned down, and stung my fingers, and fell, a wriggling red spot in the blackness.

"I have thought since how particularly ill equipped I was for such an experience. When I had started with the Time Machine, I had started with the absurd assumption that the men of the Future would certainly be infinitely ahead of ourselves in all their appliances. I had come without arms, without medicine, without anything to smoke—at times I missed tobacco frightfully—even without enough matches. If only I had thought of a Kodak! I could have flashed that glimpse of the underworld in a second, and examined it at leisure. But, as it was, I stood there with only the weapons and the powers that Nature had endowed me with—hands, feet, and teeth; these, and four safety-matches that still remained to me.

"I was afraid to push my way in among all this machinery in the dark, and it was only with my last glimpse of light I

discovered that my store of matches had run low. It had never occurred to me until that moment that there was any need to economise them, and I had wasted almost half the box in astonishing the Upper-worlders, to whom fire was a novelty. Now, as I say, I had four left, and while I stood in the dark, a hand touched mine, lank fingers came feeling over my face, and I was sensible of a peculiar unpleasant odour. I fancied I heard the breathing of a crowd of those dreadful little beings about me. I felt the box of matches in my hand being gently disengaged, and other hands behind me plucking at my clothing. The sense of these unseen creatures examining me was indescribably unpleasant. The sudden realisation of my ignorance of their ways of thinking and doing came home to me very vividly in the darkness. I shouted at them as loudly as I could. They started away, and then I could feel them approaching me again. They clutched at me more boldly, whispering odd sounds to each other. I shivered violently, and shouted again—rather discordantly. This time they were not so seriously alarmed, and they made a queer laughing noise as they came back at me. I will confess I was horribly frightened. I determined to strike another match and escape under the protection of its glare. I did so, and eking out the flicker with a scrap of paper from my pocket, I made good my retreat to the narrow tunnel. But I had scarce entered this when my light was blown out, and in the blackness I could hear the Morlocks rustling like wind among leaves, and pattering like the rain, as they hurried after me.

"In a moment I was clutched by several hands, and there was no mistaking that they were trying to haul me back. I struck another light, and waved it in their dazzled faces. You can scarce imagine how nauseatingly inhuman they looked—those pale, chinless faces and great, lidless, pinkish-grey eyes!—as they stared in their blindness and bewilderment. But I did not stay to look, I promise you: I retreated again, and when my second match had ended, I struck my third. It had almost burned through when I reached the opening into the shaft. I lay down on the edge, for the throb of the great pump below made me giddy. Then I felt side-

ways for the projecting hooks, and, as I did so, my feet were grasped from behind, and I was violently tugged backward. I lit my last match . . . and it incontinently went out. But I had my hand on the climbing bars now, and, kicking violently, I disengaged myself from the clutches of the Morlocks and was speedily clambering up the shaft, while they stayed peering and blinking up at me: all but one little wretch who followed me for some way, and well-nigh secured my boot as a trophy.

"That climb seemed interminable to me. With the last twenty or thirty feet of it a deadly nausea came upon me. I had the greatest difficulty in keeping my hold. The last few yards was a frightful struggle against this faintness. Several times my head swam, and I felt all the sensations of falling. At last, however, I got over the well-mouth somehow, and staggered out of the ruin into the blinding sunlight. I fell upon my face. Even the soil smelt sweet and clean. Then I remember Weena kissing my hands and ears, and the voices of others among the Eloi. Then, for a time, I was insensible.

§ 7

"Now, indeed, I seemed in a worse case than before. Hitherto, except during my night's anguish at the loss of the Time Machine, I had felt a sustaining hope of ultimate escape, but that hope was staggered by these new discoveries. Hitherto I had merely thought myself impeded by the childish simplicity of the little people, and by some unknown forces which I had only to understand to overcome; but there was an altogether new element in the sickening quality of the Morlocks—a something inhuman and malign. Instinctively I loathed them. Before, I had felt as a man might feel who had fallen into a pit: my concern was with the pit and how to get out of it. Now I felt like a beast in a trap, whose enemy would come upon him soon.

"The enemy I dreaded may surprise you. It was the darkness of the new moon. Weena had put this into my head by some at first incomprehensible remarks about the Dark

Nights. It was not now such a very difficult problem to guess what the coming Dark Nights might mean. The moon was on the wane: each night there was a longer interval of darkness. And I now understood to some slight degree at least the reason of the fear of the little Upper-world people for the dark. I wondered vaguely what foul villainy it might be that the Morlocks did under the new moon. I felt pretty sure now that my second hypothesis was all wrong. The Upper-world people might once have been the favoured aristocracy, and the Morlocks their mechanical servants; but that had long since passed away. The two species that had resulted from the evolution of man were sliding down towards, or had already arrived at, an altogether new relationship. The Eloi, like the Carlovingian kings, had decayed to a mere beautiful futility. They still possessed the earth on sufferance: since the Morlocks, subterranean for innumerable generations, had come at last to find the daylit surface intolerable. And the Morlocks made their garments, I inferred, and maintained them in their habitual needs, perhaps through the survival of an old habit of service. They did it as a standing horse paws with his foot, or as a man enjoys killing animals in sport: because ancient and departed necessities had impressed it on the organism. But, clearly, the old order was already in part reversed. The Nemesis of the delicate ones was creeping on apace. Ages ago, thousands of generations ago, man had thrust his brother man out of the ease and the sunshine. And now that brother was coming back —changed! Already the Eloi had begun to learn one old lesson anew. They were becoming reacquainted with Fear. And suddenly there came into my head the memory of the meat I had seen in the Under-world. It seemed odd how it floated into my mind: not stirred up as it were by the current of my meditations, but coming in almost like a question from outside. I tried to recall the form of it. I had a vague sense of something familiar, but I could not tell what it was at the time.

"Still, however helpless the little people in the presence of their mysterious Fear, I was differently constituted. I came

out of this age of ours, this ripe prime of the human race, when Fear does not paralyse and mystery has lost its terrors. I at least would defend myself. Without further delay I determined to make myself arms and a fastness where I might sleep. With that refuge as a base, I could face this strange world with some of that confidence I had lost in realising to what creatures night by night I lay exposed. I felt I could never sleep again until my bed was secure from them. I shuddered with horror to think how they must already have examined me.

"I wandered during the afternoon along the valley of the Thames, but found nothing that commended itself to my mind as inaccessible. All the buildings and trees seemed easily practicable to such dexterous climbers as the Morlocks, to judge by their wells, must be. Then the tall pinnacles of the Palace of Green Porcelain and the polished gleam of its walls came back to my memory; and in the evening, taking Weena like a child upon my shoulder, I went up the hills towards the south-west. The distance, I had reckoned, was seven or eight miles, but it must have been nearer eighteen. I had first seen the place on a moist afternoon when distances are deceptively diminished. In addition, the heel of one of my shoes was loose, and a nail was working through the sole—they were comfortable old shoes I wore about indoors—so that I was lame. And it was already long past sunset when I came in sight of the palace, silhouetted black against the pale yellow of the sky.

"Weena had been hugely delighted when I began to carry her, but after a time she desired me to let her down, and ran along by the side of me, occasionally darting off on either hand to pick flowers to stick in my pockets. My pockets had always puzzled Weena, but at the last she had concluded that they were an eccentric kind of vase for floral decoration. At least she utilised them for that purpose. And that reminds me! In changing my jacket I found . . ."

The Time Traveller paused, put his hand into his pocket, and silently placed two withered flowers, not unlike very large white mallows, upon the little table. Then he resumed his narrative.

"As the hush of evening crept over the world and we proceeded over the hill crest towards Wimbledon, Weena grew tired and wanted to return to the house of grey stone. But I pointed out the distant pinnacles of the Palace of Green Porcelain to her, and contrived to make her understand that we were seeking a refuge there from her Fear. You know that great pause that comes upon things before the dusk? Even the breeze stops in the trees. To me there is always an air of expectation about that evening stillness. The sky was clear, remote, and empty save for a few horizontal bars far down in the sunset. Well, that night the expectation took the colour of my fears. In that darkling calm my senses seemed preternaturally sharpened. I fancied I could even feel the hollowness of the ground beneath my feet: could, indeed, almost see through it the Morlocks on their ant-hill going hither and thither and waiting for the dark. In my excitement I fancied that they would receive my invasion of their burrows as a declaration of war. And why had they taken my Time Machine?

"So we went on in the quiet, and the twilight deepened into night. The clear blue of the distance faded, and one star after another came out. The ground grew dim and the trees black. Weena's fears and her fatigue grew upon her. I took her in my arms and talked to her and caressed her. Then, as the darkness grew deeper, she put her arms round my neck, and, closing her eyes, tightly pressed her face against my shoulder. So we went down a long slope into a valley, and there in the dimness I almost walked into a little river. This I waded, and went up the opposite side of the valley, past a number of sleeping houses, and by a statue—a Faun, or some such figure, *minus* the head. Here too were acacias. So far I had seen nothing of the Morlocks, but it was yet early in the night, and the darker hours before the old moon rose were still to come.

"From the brow of the next hill I saw a thick wood spreading wide and black before me. I hesitated at this. I could see no end to it, either to the right or the left. Feeling tired—my feet, in particular, were very sore—I carefully lowered Weena

from my shoulder as I halted, and sat down upon the turf. I could no longer see the Palace of Green Porcelain, and I was in doubt of my direction. I looked into the thickness of the wood and thought of what it might hide. Under that dense tangle of branches one would be out of sight of the stars. Even were there no other lurking danger—a danger I did not care to let my imagination loose upon—there would still be all the roots to stumble over and the tree-boles to strike against.

"I was very tired, too, after the excitements of the day; so I decided that I would not face it, but would pass the night upon the open hill.

"Weena, I was glad to find, was fast asleep. I carefully wrapped her in my jacket, and sat down beside her to wait for the moonrise. The hillside was quiet and deserted, but from the black of the wood there came now and then a stir of living things. Above me shone the stars, for the night was very clear. I felt a certain sense of friendly comfort in their twinkling. All the old constellations had gone from the sky, however: that slow movement which is imperceptible in a hundred human lifetimes, had long since rearranged them in unfamiliar groupings. But the Milky Way, it seemed to me, was still the same tattered streamer of star-dust as of yore. Southward (as I judged it) was a very bright red star that was new to me; it was even more splendid than our own green Sirius. And amid all these scintillating points of light one bright planet shone kindly and steadily like the face of an old friend.

"Looking at these stars suddenly dwarfed my own troubles and all the gravities of terrestrial life. I thought of their unfathomable distance, and the slow inevitable drift of their movements out of the unknown past into the unknown future. I thought of the great precessional cycle that the pole of the earth describes. Only forty times had that silent revolution occurred during all the years that I had traversed. And during these few revolutions all the activity, all the traditions, the complex organisations, the nations, languages, literatures, aspirations, even the mere memory of Man as I knew him, had been swept out of existence. Instead were these frail creatures who had forgotten their high ancestry, and the

white Things of which I went in terror. Then I thought of the Great Fear that was between the two species, and for the first time, with a sudden shiver, came the clear knowledge of what the meat I had seen might be. Yet it was too horrible! I looked at little Weena sleeping beside me, her face white and starlike under the stars, and forthwith dismissed the thought.

"Through that long night I held my mind off the Morlocks as well as I could, and whiled away the time by trying to fancy I could find signs of the old constellations in the new confusion. The sky kept very clear, except for a hazy cloud or so. No doubt I dozed at times. Then, as my vigil wore on, came a faintness in the eastward sky, like the reflection of some colourless fire, and the old moon rose, thin and peaked and white. And close behind, and overtaking it, and overflowing it, the dawn came, pale at first, and then growing pink and warm. No Morlocks had approached us. Indeed, I had seen none upon the hill that night. And in the confidence of renewed day it almost seemed to me that my fear had been unreasonable. I stood up and found my foot with the loose heel swollen at the ankle and painful under the heel; so I sat down again, took off my shoes, and flung them away.

"I awakened Weena, and we went down into the wood, now green and pleasant instead of black and forbidding. We found some fruit wherewith to break our fast. We soon met others of the dainty ones, laughing and dancing in the sunlight as though there was no such thing in Nature as the night. And then I thought once more of the meat that I had seen. I felt assured now of what it was, and from the bottom of my heart I pitied this last feeble rill from the great flood of humanity. Clearly, at some time in the Long-Ago of human decay the Morlocks' food had run short. Possibly they had lived on rats and suchlike vermin. Even now man is far less discriminating and exclusive in his food than he was—far less than any monkey. His prejudice against human flesh is no deep-seated instinct. And so these inhuman sons of men——! I tried to look at the thing in a scientific spirit. After all, they were less human and more remote than our cannibal ancestors of three or four thousand years ago. And the intelligence that would

have made this state of things a torment had gone. Why should I trouble myself? These Eloi were mere fatted cattle, which the ant-like Morlocks preserved and preyed upon—probably saw to the breeding of. And there was Weena dancing at my side!

"Then I tried to preserve myself from the horror that was coming upon me, by regarding it as a rigorous punishment of human selfishness. Man had been content to live in ease and delight upon the labours of his fellow man, had taken Necessity as his watchword and excuse, and in the fulness of time Necessity had come home to him. I even tried a Carlyle-like scorn of this wretched aristocracy in decay. But this attitude of mind was impossible. However great their intellectual degradation, the Eloi had kept too much of the human form not to claim my sympathy, and to make me perforce a sharer in their degradation and their Fear.

"I had at that time very vague ideas as to the course I should pursue. My first was to secure some safe place of refuge, and to make myself such arms of metal or stone as I could contrive. That necessity was immediate. In the next place, I hoped to procure some means of fire, so that I should have the weapon of a torch at hand, for nothing, I knew, would be more efficient against these Morlocks. Then I wanted to arrange some contrivance to break open the doors of bronze under the White Sphinx. I had in mind a battering-ram. I had a persuasion that if I could enter those doors and carry a blaze of light before me I should discover the Time Machine and escape. I could not imagine the Morlocks were strong enough to move it far away. Weena I had resolved to bring with me to our own time. And turning such schemes over in my mind I pursued our way towards the building which my fancy had chosen as our dwelling.

§ 8

"I found the Palace of Green Porcelain, when we approached it about noon, deserted and falling into ruin. Only ragged vestiges of glass remained in its windows, and great

sheets of the green facing had fallen away from the corroded metallic framework. It lay very high upon a turfy down, and looking north-eastward before I entered it, I was surprised to see a large estuary, or even creek, where I judged Wandsworth and Battersea must once have been. I thought then—though I never followed up the thought—of what might have happened, or might be happening, to the living things in the sea.

"The material of the Palace proved on examination to be indeed porcelain, and along the face of it I saw an inscription in some unknown character. I thought, rather foolishly, that Weena might help me to interpret this, but I only learned that the bare idea of writing had never entered her head. She always seemed to me, I fancy, more human than she was, perhaps because her affection was so human.

"Within the big valves of the door—which were open and broken—we found, instead of the customary hall, a long gallery lit by many side windows. At the first glance I was reminded of a museum. The tiled floor was thick with dust, and a remarkable array of miscellaneous objects was shrouded in the same grey covering. Then I perceived, standing strange and gaunt in the centre of the hall, what was clearly the lower part of a huge skeleton. I recognised by the oblique feet that it was some extinct creature after the fashion of the Megatherium. The skull and the upper bones lay beside it in the thick dust, and in one place, where rain-water had dropped through a leak in the roof, the thing itself had been worn away. Further in the gallery was the huge skeleton barrel of a Brontosaurus. My museum hypothesis was confirmed. Going towards the side I found what appeared to be sloping shelves, and, clearing away the thick dust, I found the old familiar glass cases of our own time. But they must have been air-tight to judge from the fair preservation of some of their contents.

"Clearly we stood among the ruins of some latter-day South Kensington! Here, apparently, was the Palæontological Section, and a very splendid array of fossils it must have been, though the inevitable process of decay that had been

staved off for a time, and had, through the extinction of bacteria and fungi, lost ninety-nine hundredths of its force, was, nevertheless, with extreme sureness if with extreme slowness at work again upon all its treasures. Here and there I found traces of the little people in the shape of rare fossils broken to pieces or threaded in strings upon reeds. And the cases had in some instances been bodily removed—by the Morlocks as I judged. The place was very silent. The thick dust deadened our footsteps. Weena, who had been rolling a sea-urchin down the sloping glass of a case, presently came, as I stared about me, and very quietly took my hand and stood beside me.

"And at first I was so much surprised by this ancient monument of an intellectual age, that I gave no thought to the possibilities it presented. Even my preoccupation about the Time Machine receded a little from my mind.

"To judge from the size of the place, this Palace of Green Porcelain had a great deal more in it than a Gallery of Palæontology; possibly historical galleries; it might be, even a library! To me, at least in my present circumstances, these would be vastly more interesting than this spectacle of old-time geology in decay. Exploring, I found another short gallery running transversely to the first. This appeared to be devoted to minerals, and the sight of a block of sulphur set my mind running on gunpowder. But I could find no saltpetre; indeed, no nitrates of any kind. Doubtless they had deliquesced ages ago. Yet the sulphur hung in my mind, and set up a train of thinking. As for the rest of the contents of that gallery, though on the whole they were the best preserved of all I saw, I had little interest. I am no specialist in mineralogy, and I went on down a very ruinous aisle running parallel to the first hall I had entered. Apparently this section had been devoted to natural history, but everything had long since passed out of recognition. A few shrivelled and blackened vestiges of what had once been stuffed animals, desiccated mummies in jars that had once held spirit, a brown dust of departed plants; that was all! I was sorry for that, because I should have been glad to trace the patent readjust-

ments by which the conquest of animated nature had been attained. Then we came to a gallery of simply colossal proportions, but singularly ill-lit, the floor of it running downward at a slight angle from the end at which I entered. At intervals white globes hung from the ceiling—many of them cracked and smashed—which suggested that originally the place had been artificially lit. Here I was more in my element, for rising on either side of me were the huge bulks of big machines, all greatly corroded and many broken down, but some still fairly complete. You know I have a certain weakness for mechanism, and I was inclined to linger among these; the more so as for the most part they had the interest of puzzles, and I could make only the vaguest guesses at what they were for. I fancied that if I could solve their puzzles I should find myself in possession of powers that might be of use against the Morlocks.

"Suddenly Weena came very close to my side. So suddenly that she startled me. Had it not been for her I do not think I should have noticed that the floor of the gallery sloped at all.* The end I had come in at was quite above ground, and was lit by rare slit-like windows. As you went down the length, the ground came up against these windows, until at last there was a pit like the 'area' of a London house before each, and only a narrow line of daylight at the top. I went slowly along, puzzling about the machines, and had been too intent upon them to notice the gradual diminution of the light, until Weena's increasing apprehensions drew my attention. Then I saw that the gallery ran down at last into a thick darkness. I hesitated, and then, as I looked round me, I saw that the dust was less abundant and its surface less even. Further away towards the dimness, it appeared to be broken by a number of small narrow footprints. My sense of the immediate presence of the Morlocks revived at that. I felt that I was wasting my time in this academic examination of machinery. I called to mind that it was already far advanced in the afternoon, and that I had still no weapon, no refuge,

*It may be, of course, that the floor did not slope, but that the museum was built into the side of a hill.—Ed.

and no means of making a fire. And then down in the remote blackness of the gallery I heard a peculiar pattering, and the same odd noises I had heard down the well.

"I took Weena's hand. Then, struck with a sudden idea, I left her and turned to a machine from which projected a lever not unlike those in a signal-box. Clambering upon the stand, and grasping this lever in my hands, I put all my weight upon it sideways. Suddenly Weena, deserted in the central aisle, began to whimper. I had judged the strength of the lever pretty correctly, for it snapped after a minute's strain, and I rejoined her with a mace in my hand more than sufficient, I judged, for any Morlock skull I might encounter. And I longed very much to kill a Morlock or so. Very inhuman, you may think, to want to go killing one's own descendants! But it was impossible, somehow, to feel any humanity in the things. Only my disinclination to leave Weena, and a persuasion that if I began to slake my thirst for murder my Time Machine might suffer, restrained me from going straight down the gallery and killing the brutes I heard.

"Well, mace in one hand and Weena in the other, I went out of that gallery and into another and still larger one, which at the first glance reminded me of a military chapel hung with tattered flags. The brown and charred rags that hung from the sides of it, I presently recognised as the decaying vestiges of books. They had long since dropped to pieces, and every semblance of print had left them. But here and there were warped boards and cracked metallic clasps that told the tale well enough. Had I been a literary man I might, perhaps, have moralised upon the futility of all ambition. But as it was, the thing that struck me with keenest force was the enormous waste of labour to which this sombre wilderness of rotting paper testified. At the time I will confess that I thought chiefly of the *Philosophical Transactions* and my own seventeen papers upon physical optics.

"Then, going up a broad staircase, we came to what may once have been a gallery of technical chemistry. And here I had not a little hope of useful discoveries. Except at one end where the roof had collapsed, this gallery was well

preserved. I went eagerly to every unbroken case. And at last, in one of the really air-tight cases, I found a box of matches. Very eagerly I tried them. They were perfectly good. They were not even damp. I turned to Weena. 'Dance,' I cried to her in her own tongue. For now I had a weapon indeed against the horrible creatures we feared. And so, in that derelict museum, upon the thick soft carpeting of dust, to Weena's huge delight, I solemnly performed a kind of composite dance, whistling *The Land of the Leal* as cheerfully as I could. In part it was a modest *cancan*, in part a step-dance, in part a skirt-dance (so far as my tail-coat permitted), and in part original. For I am naturally inventive, as you know.

"Now, I still think that for this box of matches to have escaped the wear of time for immemorial years was a most strange, as for me it was a most fortunate thing. Yet, oddly enough, I found a far unlikelier substance, and that was camphor. I found it in a sealed jar, that by chance, I suppose, had been really hermetically sealed. I fancied at first that it was paraffin wax, and smashed the glass accordingly. But the odour of camphor was unmistakable. In the universal decay this volatile substance had chanced to survive, perhaps through many thousands of centuries. It reminded me of a sepia painting I had once seen done from the ink of a fossil Belemnite that must have perished and become fossilised millions of years ago. I was about to throw it away, but I remembered that it was inflammable and burned with a good bright flame—was, in fact, an excellent candle—and I put it in my pocket. I found no explosives, however, nor any means of breaking down the bronze doors. As yet my iron crowbar was the most helpful thing I had chanced upon. Nevertheless I left that gallery greatly elated.

"I cannot tell you all the story of that long afternoon. It would require a great effort of memory to recall my explorations in at all the proper order. I remember a long gallery of rusting stands of arms, and how I hesitated between my crowbar and a hatchet or a sword. I could not carry both, however, and my bar of iron promised best against the bronze gates. There were numbers of guns, pistols, and rifles.

The most were masses of rust, but many were of some new metal, and still fairly sound. But any cartridges or powder there may once have been had rotted into dust. One corner I saw was charred and shattered; perhaps, I thought, by an explosion among the specimens. In another place was a vast array of idols—Polynesian, Mexican, Grecian, Phœnician, every country on earth I should think. And here, yielding to an irresistible impulse, I wrote my name upon the nose of a steatite monster from South America that particularly took my fancy.

"As the evening drew on, my interest waned. I went through gallery after gallery, dusty, silent, often ruinous, the exhibits sometimes mere heaps of rust and lignite, sometimes fresher. In one place I suddenly found myself near the model of a tin-mine, and then by the merest accident I discovered, in an air-tight case, two dynamite cartridges! I shouted 'Eureka!' and smashed the case with joy. Then came a doubt. I hesitated. Then, selecting a little side gallery, I made my essay. I never felt such a disappointment as I did in waiting five, ten, fifteen minutes for an explosion that never came. Of course the things were dummies, as I might have guessed from their presence. I really believe that, had they not been so, I should have rushed off incontinently and blown Sphinx, bronze doors, and (as it proved) by chances of finding the Time Machine, all together into non-existence.

"It was after that, I think, that we came to a little open court within the palace. It was turfed, and had three fruit-trees. So we rested and refreshed ourselves. Towards sunset I began to consider our position. Night was creeping upon us, and my inaccessible hiding place had still to be found. But that troubled me very little now. I had in my possession a thing that was, perhaps, the best of all defences against the Morlocks—I had matches! I had the camphor in my pocket, too, if a blaze were needed. It seemed to me that the best thing we could do would be to pass the night in the open, protected by a fire. In the morning there was the getting of the Time Machine. Towards that, as yet, I had only my iron mace. But now, with my growing knowledge, I felt very

differently towards those bronze doors. Up to this, I had refrained from forcing them, largely because of the mystery on the other side. They had never impressed me as being very strong, and I hoped to find my bar of iron not altogether inadequate for the work.

§ 9

"We emerged from the palace while the sun was still in part above the horizon. I was determined to reach the White Sphinx early the next morning, and ere the dusk I purposed pushing through the woods that had stopped me on the previous journey. My plan was to go as far as possible that night, and then, building a fire, to sleep in the protection of its glare. Accordingly, as we went along I gathered any sticks or dried grass I saw, and presently had my arms full of such litter. Thus loaded, our progress was slower than I had anticipated, and besides Weena was tired. And I began to suffer from sleepiness too; so that it was full night before we reached the wood. Upon the shrubby hill of its edge Weena would have stopped, fearing the darkness before us; but a singular sense of impending calamity, that should indeed have served me as a warning, drove me onward. I had been without sleep for a night and two days, and I was feverish and irritable. I felt sleep coming upon me, and the Morlocks with it.

"While we hesitated, among the black bushes behind us, and dim against their blackness, I saw three crouching figures. There was scrub and long grass all about us, and I did not feel safe from their insidious approach. The forest, I calculated, was rather less than a mile across. If we could get through it to the bare hillside, there, as it seemed to me, was an altogether safer resting-place; I thought that with my matches and my camphor I could contrive to keep my path illuminated through the woods. Yet it was evident that if I was to flourish matches with my hands I should have to abandon my firewood; so, rather reluctantly, I put it down. And then it came into my head that I would amaze our friends behind by light-

ing it. I was to discover the atrocious folly of this proceeding, but it came to my mind as an ingenious move for covering our retreat.

"I don't know if you have ever thought what a rare thing flame must be in the absence of man and in a temperate climate. The sun's heat is rarely strong enough to burn, even when it is focussed by dewdrops, as is sometimes the case in more tropical districts. Lightning may blast and blacken, but it rarely gives rise to widespread fire. Decaying vegetation may occasionally smoulder with the heat of its fermentation, but this rarely results in flame. In this decadence, too, the art of fire-making had been forgotten on the earth. The red tongues that went licking up my heap of wood were an altogether new and strange thing to Weena.

"She wanted to run to it and play with it. I believe she would have cast herself into it had I not restrained her. But I caught her up, and, in spite of her struggles, plunged boldly before me into the wood. For a little way the glare of my fire lit the path. Looking back presently, I could see, through the crowded stems, that from my heap of sticks the blaze had spread to some bushes adjacent, and a curved line of fire was creeping up the grass of the hill. I laughed at that, and turned again to the dark trees before me. It was very black, and Weena clung to me convulsively, but there was still, as my eyes grew accustomed to the darkness, sufficient light for me to avoid the stems. Overhead it was simply black, except where a gap of remote blue sky shone down upon us here and there. I struck none of my matches because I had no hand free. Upon my left arm I carried my little one, in my right hand I had my iron bar.

"For some way I heard nothing but the crackling twigs under my feet, the faint rustle of the breeze above, and my own breathing and the throb of the blood-vessels in my ears. Then I seemed to know of a pattering about me. I pushed on grimly. The pattering grew more distinct, and then I caught the same queer sounds and voices I had heard in the Underworld. There were evidently several of the Morlocks, and they were closing in upon me. Indeed, in another minute I

felt a tug at my coat, then something at my arm. And Weena shivered violently, and became quite still.

"It was time for a match. But to get one I must put her down. I did so, and, as I fumbled with my pocket, a struggle began in the darkness about my knees, perfectly silent on her part and with the same peculiar cooing sounds from the Morlocks. Soft little hands, too, were creeping over my coat and back, touching even my neck. Then the match scratched and fizzed. I held it flaring, and saw the white backs of the Morlocks in flight amid the trees. I hastily took a lump of camphor from my pocket, and prepared to light it as soon as the match should wane. Then I looked at Weena. She was lying clutching my feet and quite motionless, with her face to the ground. With a sudden fright I stooped to her. She seemed scarcely to breathe. I lit the block of camphor and flung it to the ground, and as it split and flared up and drove back the Morlocks and the shadows, I knelt down and lifted her. The wood behind seemed full of the stir and murmur of a great company!

"She seemed to have fainted. I put her carefully upon my shoulder and rose to push on, and then there came a horrible realisation. In manœuvring with my matches and Weena, I had turned myself about several times, and now I had not the faintest idea in what direction lay my path. For all I knew, I might be facing back towards the Palace of Green Porcelain. I found myself in a cold sweat. I had to think rapidly what to do. I determined to build a fire and encamp where we were. I put Weena, still motionless, down upon a turfy bole, and very hastily, as my first lump of camphor waned, I began collecting sticks and leaves. Here and there out of the darkness round me the Morlocks' eyes shone like carbuncles.

"The camphor flickered and went out. I lit a match, and as I did so, two white forms that had been approaching Weena dashed hastily away. One was so blinded by the light that he came straight for me, and I felt his bones grind under the blow of my fist. He gave a whoop of dismay, staggered a little way, and fell down. I lit another piece of camphor, and went

on gathering my bonfire. Presently I noticed how dry was some of the foliage above me, for since my arrival on the Time Machine, a matter of a week, no rain had fallen. So, instead of casting about among the trees for fallen twigs, I began leaping up and dragging down branches. Very soon I had a choking smoky fire of green wood and dry sticks, and could economise my camphor. Then I turned to where Weena lay beside my iron mace. I tried what I could to revive her, but she lay like one dead. I could not even satisfy myself whether or not she breathed.

"Now, the smoke of the fire beat over towards me, and it must have made me heavy of a sudden. Moreover, the vapour of camphor was in the air. My fire would not need replenishing for an hour or so. I felt very weary after my exertion, and sat down. The wood, too, was full of a slumbrous murmur that I did not understand. I seemed just to nod and open my eyes. But all was dark, and the Morlocks had their hands upon me. Flinging off their clinging fingers I hastily felt in my pocket for the match-box, and—it had gone! Then they gripped and closed with me, again. In a moment I knew what had happened. I had slept, and my fire had gone out, and the bitterness of death came over my soul. The forest seemed full of the smell of burning wood. I was caught by the neck, by the hair, by the arms, and pulled down. It was indescribably horrible in the darkness to feel all these soft creatures heaped upon me. I felt as if I was in a monstrous spider's web. I was overpowered, and went down. I felt little teeth nipping at my neck. I rolled over, and as I did so my hand came against my iron lever. It gave me strength. I struggled up, shaking the human rats from me, and, holding the bar short, I thrust where I judged their faces might be. I could feel the succulent giving of flesh and bone under my blows, and for a moment I was free.

"The strange exultation that so often seems to accompany hard fighting came upon me. I knew that both I and Weena were lost, but I determined to make the Morlocks pay for their meat. I stood with my back to a tree, swinging the iron bar before me. The whole wood was full of the stir and cries of

them. A minute passed. Their voices seemed to rise to a higher pitch of excitement, and their movements grew faster. Yet none came within reach. I stood glaring at the blackness. Then suddenly came hope. What if the Morlocks were afraid? And close on the heels of that came a strange thing. The darkness seemed to grow luminous. Very dimly I began to see the Morlocks about me—three battered at my feet—and then I recognised, with incredulous surprise, that the others were running, in an incessant stream, as it seemed, from behind me, and away through the wood in front. And their backs seemed no longer white, but reddish. As I stood agape, I saw a little red spark go drifting across a gap of starlight between the branches, and vanish. And at that I understood the smell of burning wood, the slumbrous murmur that was growing now into a gusty roar, the red glow, and the Morlocks' flight.

"Stepping out from behind my tree and looking back, I saw, through the black pillars of the nearer trees, the flames of the burning forest. It was my first fire coming after me. With that I looked for Weena, but she was gone. The hissing and crackling behind me, the explosive thud as each fresh tree burst into flame, left little time for reflection. My iron bar still gripped, I followed in the Morlocks' path. It was a close race. Once the flames crept forward so swiftly on my right as I ran that I was outflanked and had to strike off to the left. But at last I emerged upon a small open space, and as I did so, a Morlock came blundering towards me, and past me, and went on straight into the fire!

"And now I was to see the most weird and horrible thing, I think, of all that I beheld in that future age. This whole space was as bright as day with the reflection of the fire. In the centre was a hillock or tumulus, surmounted by a scorched hawthorn. Beyond this was another arm of the burning forest, with yellow tongues already writhing from it, completely encircling the space with a fence of fire. Upon the hillside were some thirty or forty Morlocks, dazzled by the light and heat, and blundering hither and thither against each other in their bewilderment. At first I did not realise their blindness, and struck furiously at them with my bar, in a frenzy of fear, as

they approached me, killing one and crippling several more. But when I had watched the gestures of one of them groping under the hawthorn against the red sky, and heard their moans, I was assured of their absolute helplessness and misery in the glare, and I struck no more of them.

"Yet every now and then one would come straight towards me, setting loose a quivering horror that made me quick to elude him. At one time the flames died down somewhat, and I feared the foul creatures would presently be able to see me. I was even thinking of beginning the fight by killing some of them before this should happen; but the fire burst out again brightly, and I stayed my hand. I walked about the hill among them and avoided them, looking for some trace of Weena. But Weena was gone.

"At last I sat down on the summit of the hillock, and watched this strange incredible company of blind things groping to and fro, and making uncanny noises to each other, as the glare of the fire beat on them. The coiling uprush of smoke streamed across the sky, and through the rare tatters of that red canopy, remote as though they belonged to another universe, shone the little stars. Two or three Morlocks came blundering into me, and I drove them off with blows of my fists, trembling as I did so.

"For the most part of that night I was persuaded it was a nightmare. I bit myself and screamed in a passionate desire to awake. I beat the ground with my hands, and got up and sat down again, and wandered here and there, and again sat down. Then I would fall to rubbing my eyes and calling upon God to let me awake. Thrice I saw Morlocks put their heads down in a kind of agony and rush into the flames. But, at last, above the subsiding red of the fire, above the streaming masses of black smoke and the whitening and blackening tree stumps, and the diminishing numbers of these dim creatures, came the white light of the day.

"I searched again for traces of Weena, but there were none. It was plain that they had left her poor little body in the forest. I cannot describe how it relieved me to think that it

had escaped the awful fate to which it seemed destined. As I thought of that, I was almost moved to begin a massacre of the helpless abominations about me, but I contained myself. The hillock, as I have said, was a kind of island in the forest. From its summit I could now make out through a haze of smoke the Palace of Green Porcelain, and from that I could get my bearings for the White Sphinx. And so, leaving the remnant of these damned souls still going hither and thither and moaning, as the day grew clearer, I tied some grass about my feet and limped on across smoking ashes and among black stems, that still pulsated internally with fire, towards the hiding place of the Time Machine. I walked slowly, for I was almost exhausted, as well as lame, and I felt the intensest wretchedness for the horrible death of little Weena. It seemed an overwhelming calamity. Now, in this old familiar room, it is more like the sorrow of a dream than an actual loss. But that morning it left me absolutely lonely again—terribly alone. I began to think of this house of mine, of this fireside, of some of you, and with such thoughts came a longing that was pain.

"But, as I walked over the smoking ashes under the bright morning sky, I made a discovery. In my trouser pocket were still some loose matches. The box must have leaked before it was lost.

§ 10

"About eight or nine in the morning I came to the same seat of yellow metal from which I had viewed the world upon the evening of my arrival. I thought of my hasty conclusions upon that evening and could not refrain from laughing bitterly at my confidence. Here was the same beautiful scene, the same abundant foliage, the same splendid palaces and magnificent ruins, the same silver river running between its fertile banks. The gay robes of the beautiful people moved hither and thither among the trees. Some were bathing in exactly the place where I had saved Weena, and

that suddenly gave me a keen stab of pain. And like blots upon the landscape rose the cupolas above the ways to the Under-world. I understood now what all the beauty of the Over-world people covered. Very pleasant was their day, as pleasant as the day of the cattle in the field. Like the cattle, they knew of no enemies and provided against no needs. And their end was the same.

"I grieved to think how brief the dream of the human intellect had been. It had committed suicide. It had set itself steadfastly towards comfort and ease, a balanced society with security and permanency as its watchword, it had attained its hopes—to come to this at last. Once, life and property must have reached almost absolute safety. The rich had been assured of his wealth and comfort, the toiler assured of his life and work. No doubt in that perfect world there had been no unemployed problem, no social question left unsolved. And a great quiet had followed.

"It is a law of Nature we overlook, that intellectual versatility is the compensation for change, danger, and trouble. An animal perfectly in harmony with its environment is a perfect mechanism. Nature never appeals to intelligence until habit and instinct are useless. There is no intelligence where there is no change and no need of change. Only those animals partake of intelligence that have to meet a huge variety of needs and dangers.

"So, as I see it, the Upper-world man had drifted towards his feeble prettiness, and the Under-world to mere mechanical industry. But that perfect state had lacked one thing even for mechanical perfection—absolute permanency. Apparently, as time went on, the feeding of the Under-world, however it was effected, had become disjointed. Mother Necessity, who had been staved off for a few thousand years, came back again, and she began below. The Under-world being in contact with machinery, which, however perfect, still needs some little thought outside habit, had probably retained perforce rather more initiative, if less of every other human character, than the Upper. And when other meat failed them, they turned to what old habit had hitherto for-

bidden. So I say I saw it in my last view of the world of Eight Hundred and Two Thousand Seven Hundred and One. It may be as wrong an explanation as mortal wit could invent. It is how the thing shaped itself to me, and as that I give it to you.

"After the fatigues, excitements, and terrors of the past days, and in spite of my grief, this seat and the tranquil view and the warm sunlight were very pleasant. I was very tired and sleepy, and soon my theorising passed into dozing. Catching myself at that, I took my own hint, and spreading myself out upon the turf I had a long and refreshing sleep.

"I awoke a little before sunsetting. I now felt safe against being caught napping by the Morlocks, and, stretching myself, I came on down the hill towards the White Sphinx. I had my crowbar in one hand, and the other hand played with the matches in my pocket.

"And now came a most unexpected thing. As I approached the pedestal of the sphinx I found the bronze valves were open. They had slid down into grooves.

"At that I stopped short before them, hesitating to enter.

"Within was a small apartment, and on a raised place in the corner of this was the Time Machine. I had the small levers in my pocket. So here, after all my elaborate preparations for the siege of the White Sphinx, was a meek surrender. I threw my iron bar away, almost sorry not to use it.

"A sudden thought came into my head as I stooped towards the portal. For once, at least, I grasped the mental operations of the Morlocks. Suppressing a strong inclination to laugh, I stepped through the bronze frame and up to the Time Machine. I was surprised to find it had been carefully oiled and cleaned. I have suspected since that the Morlocks had even partially taken it to pieces while trying in their dim way to grasp its purpose.

"Now as I stood and examined it, finding a pleasure in the mere touch of the contrivance, the thing I had expected happened. The bronze panels suddenly slid up and struck the frame with a clang. I was in the dark—trapped. So the Morlocks thought. At that I chuckled gleefully.

"I could already hear their murmuring laughter as they came towards me. Very calmly I tried to strike the match. I had only to fix on the levers and depart then like a ghost. But I had overlooked one little thing. The matches were of that abominable kind that light only on the box.

"You may imagine how all my calm vanished. The little brutes were close upon me. One touched me. I made a sweeping blow in the dark at them with the levers, and began to scramble into the saddle of the machine. Then came one hand upon me and then another. Then I had simply to fight against their persistent fingers for my levers, and at the same time feel for the studs over which these fitted. Once, indeed, they almost got away from me. As it slipped from my hand, I had to butt in the dark with my head—I could hear the Morlock's skull ring—to recover it. It was a nearer thing than the fight in the forest, I think, this last scramble.

"But at last the lever was fixed and pulled over. The clinging hands slipped from me. The darkness presently fell from my eyes. I found myself in the same grey light and tumult I have already described.

§ 11

"I have already told you of the sickness and confusion that comes with time travelling. And this time I was not seated properly in the saddle, but sideways and in an unstable fashion. For an indefinite time I clung to the machine as it swayed and vibrated, quite unheeding how I went, and when I brought myself to look at the dials again I was amazed to find where I had arrived. One dial records days, another thousands of days, another millions of days, and another thousands of millions. Now, instead of reversing the levers, I had pulled them over so as to go forward with them, and when I came to look at these indicators I found that the thousands hand was sweeping round as fast as the seconds hand of a watch—into futurity.

"As I drove on, a peculiar change crept over the appearance of things. The palpitating greyness grew darker; then—

though I was still travelling with prodigious velocity—the blinking succession of day and night, which was usually indicative of a slower pace, returned, and grew more and more marked. This puzzled me very much at first. The alternations of night and day grew slower and slower, and so did the passage of the sun across the sky, until they seemed to stretch through centuries. At last a steady twilight brooded over the earth, a twilight only broken now and then when a comet glared across the darkling sky. The band of light that had indicated the sun had long since disappeared; for the sun had ceased to set—it simply rose and fell in the west, and grew ever broader and more red. All trace of the moon had vanished. The circling of the stars, growing slower and slower, had given place to creeping points of light. At last, some time before I stopped, the sun, red and very large, halted motionless upon the horizon, a vast dome glowing with a dull heat, and now and then suffering a momentary extinction. At one time it had for a little while glowed more brilliantly again, but it speedily reverted to its sullen red heat. I perceived by this slowing down of its rising and setting that the work of the tidal drag was done. The earth had come to rest with one face to the sun, even as in our own time the moon faces the earth. Very cautiously, for I remembered my former headlong fall, I began to reverse my motion. Slower and slower went the circling hands until the thousands one seemed motionless and the daily one was no longer a mere mist upon its scale. Still slower, until the dim outlines of a desolate beach grew visible.

"I stopped very gently and sat upon the Time Machine, looking round. The sky was no longer blue. North-eastward it was inky black, and out of the blackness shone brightly and steadily the pale white stars. Overhead it was a deep Indian red and starless, and south-eastward it grew brighter to a glowing scarlet where, cut by the horizon, lay the huge hull of the sun, red and motionless. The rocks about me were of a harsh reddish colour, and all the trace of life that I could see at first was the intensely green vegetation that covered every projecting point on their south-eastern face. It

was the same rich green that one sees on forest moss or on the lichen in caves: plants which like these grow in a perpetual twilight.

"The machine was standing on a sloping beach. The sea stretched away to the south-west, to rise into a sharp bright horizon against the wan sky. There were no breakers and no waves, for not a breath of wind was stirring. Only a slight oily swell rose and fell like a gentle breathing, and showed that the eternal sea was still moving and living. And along the margin where the water sometimes broke was a thick incrustation of salt—pink under the lurid sky. There was a sense of oppression in my head, and I noticed that I was breathing very fast. The sensation reminded me of my only experience of mountaineering, and from that I judged the air to be more rarefied than it is now.

"Far away up the desolate slope I heard a harsh scream, and saw a thing like a huge white butterfly go slanting and fluttering up into the sky and, circling, disappear over some low hillocks beyond. The sound of its voice was so dismal that I shivered and seated myself more firmly upon the machine. Looking round me again, I saw that, quite near, what I had taken to be a reddish mass of rock was moving slowly towards me. Then I saw the thing was really a monstrous crab-like creature. Can you imagine a crab as large as yonder table, with its many legs moving slowly and uncertainly, its big claws swaying, its long antennæ, like carters' whips, waving and feeling, and its stalked eyes gleaming at you on either side of its metallic front? Its back was corrugated and ornamented with ungainly bosses, and a greenish incrustation blotched it here and there. I could see the many palps of its complicated mouth flickering and feeling as it moved.

"As I stared at this sinister apparition crawling towards me, I felt a tickling on my cheek as though a fly had lighted there. I tried to brush it away with my hand, but in a moment it returned, and almost immediately came another by my ear. I struck at this, and caught something threadlike. It was drawn swiftly out of my hand. With a frightful qualm, I turned, and saw that I had grasped the antenna of

another monster crab that stood just behind me. Its evil eyes were wriggling on their stalks, its mouth was all alive with appetite, and its vast ungainly claws, smeared with an algal slime, were descending upon me. In a moment my hand was on the lever, and I had placed a month between myself and these monsters. But I was still on the same beach, and I saw them distinctly now as soon as I stopped. Dozens of them seemed to be crawling here and there, in the sombre light, among the foliated sheets of intense green.

"I cannot convey the sense of abominable desolation that hung over the world. The red eastern sky, the northward blackness, the salt Dead Sea, the stony beach crawling with these foul, slow-stirring monsters, the uniform poisonous-looking green of the lichenous plants, the thin air that hurts one's lungs; all contributed to an appalling effect. I moved on a hundred years, and there was the same red sun—a little larger, a little duller—the same dying sea, the same chill air, and the same crowd of earthly crustacea creeping in and out among the green weed and the red rocks. And in the westward sky I saw a curved pale line like a vast new moon.

"So I travelled, stopping ever and again, in great strides of a thousand years or more, drawn on by the mystery of the earth's fate, watching with a strange fascination the sun grow larger and duller in the westward sky, and the life of the old earth ebb away. At last, more than thirty million years hence, the huge red-hot dome of the sun had come to obscure nearly a tenth part of the darkling heavens. Then I stopped once more, for the crawling multitude of crabs had disappeared, and the red beach, save for its livid green liverworts and lichens, seemed lifeless. And now it was flecked with white. A bitter cold assailed me. Rare white flakes ever and again came eddying down. To the north-eastward, the glare of snow lay under the starlight of the sable sky, and I could see an undulating crest of hillocks pinkish white. There were fringes of ice along the sea margin, with drifting masses further out; but the main expanse of that salt ocean, all bloody under the eternal sunset, was still unfrozen.

"I looked about me to see if any traces of animal life re-

mained. A certain indefinable apprehension still kept me in the saddle of the machine. But I saw nothing moving, in earth or sky or sea. The green slime on the rocks alone testified that life was not extinct. A shallow sand-bank had appeared in the sea and the water had receded from the beach. I fancied I saw some black object flopping about upon this bank, but it became motionless as I looked at it, and I judged that my eye had been deceived, and that the black object was merely a rock. The stars in the sky were intensely bright and seemed to me to twinkle very little.

"Suddenly I noticed that the circular westward outline of the sun had changed; that a concavity, a bay, had appeared in the curve. I saw this grow larger. For a minute perhaps I stared aghast at this blackness that was creeping over the day, and then I realised that an eclipse was beginning. Either the moon or the planet Mercury was passing across the sun's disk. Naturally, at first I took it to be the moon, but there is much to incline me to believe that what I really saw was the transit of an inner planet passing very near to the earth.

"The darkness grew apace; a cold wind began to blow in freshening gusts from the east, and the showering white flakes in the air increased in number. From the edge of the sea came a ripple and whisper. Beyond these lifeless sounds the world was silent. Silent? It would be hard to convey the stillness of it. All the sounds of man, the bleating of sheep, the cries of birds, the hum of insects, the stir that makes the background of our lives—all that was over. As the darkness thickened, the eddying flakes grew more abundant, dancing before my eyes; and the cold of the air more intense. At last, one by one, swiftly, one after the other, the white peaks of the distant hills vanished into blackness. The breeze rose to a moaning wind. I saw the black central shadow of the eclipse sweeping towards me. In another moment the pale stars alone were visible. All else was rayless obscurity. The sky was absolutely black.

"A horror of this great darkness came on me. The cold, that smote to my marrow, and the pain I felt in breathing,

overcame me. I shivered, and a deadly nausea seized me. Then like a red-hot bow in the sky appeared the edge of the sun. I got off the machine to recover myself. I felt giddy and incapable of facing the return journey. As I stood sick and confused I saw again the moving thing upon the shoal—there was no mistake now that it was a moving thing—against the red water of the sea. It was a round thing, the size of a football perhaps, or, it may be, bigger, and tentacles trailed down from it; it seemed black against the weltering blood-red water, and it was hopping fitfully about. Then I felt I was fainting. But a terrible dread of lying helpless in that remote and awful twilight sustained me while I clambered upon the saddle.

§ 12

"So I came back. For a long time I must have been insensible upon the machine. The blinking succession of the days and nights was resumed, the sun got golden again, the sky blue. I breathed with greater freedom. The fluctuating contours of the land ebbed and flowed. The hands spun backward upon the dials. At last I saw again the dim shadows of houses, the evidences of decadent humanity. These, too, changed and passed, and others came. Presently, when the millions dial was at zero, I slackened speed. I began to recognise our own petty and familiar architecture, the thousands hand ran back to the starting-point, the night and day flapped slower and slower. Then the old walls of the laboratory came round me. Very gently, now, I slowed the mechanism down.

"I saw one little thing that seemed odd to me. I think I have told you that when I set out, before my velocity became very high, Mrs. Watchett had walked across the room, travelling, as it seemed to me, like a rocket. As I returned, I passed again across that minute when she traversed the laboratory. But now her every motion appeared to be the exact inversion of her previous ones. The door at the lower end opened, and she glided quietly up the laboratory, back foremost, and disappeared behind the door by which she had

previously entered. Just before that I seemed to see Hillyer for a moment; but he passed like a flash.

"Then I stopped the machine, and saw about me again the old familiar laboratory, my tools, my appliances just as I had left them. I got off the thing very shakily, and sat down upon my bench. For several minutes I trembled violently. Then I became calmer. Around me was my old workshop again, exactly as it had been. I might have slept there, and the whole thing have been a dream.

"And yet, not exactly! The thing had started from the south-east corner of the laboratory. It had come to rest again in the north-west, against the wall where you saw it. That gives you the exact distance from my little lawn to the pedestal of the White Sphinx, into which the Morlocks had carried my machine.

"For a time my brain went stagnant. Presently I got up and came through the passage here, limping, because my heel was still painful, and feeling sorely begrimed. I saw the *Pall Mall Gazette* on the table by the door. I found the date was indeed to-day, and looking at the timepiece, saw the hour was almost eight o'clock. I heard your voices and the clatter of plates. I hesitated—I felt so sick and weak. Then I sniffed good wholesome meat, and opened the door on you. You know the rest. I washed, and dined, and now I am telling you the story.

"I know," he said, after a pause, "that all this will be absolutely incredible to you. To me the one incredible thing is that I am here to-night in this old familiar room looking into your friendly faces and telling you these strange adventures."

He looked at the Medical Man. "No. I cannot expect you to believe it. Take it as a lie—or a prophecy. Say I dreamed it in the workshop. Consider I have been speculating upon the destinies of our race until I have hatched this fiction. Treat my assertion of its truth as a mere stroke of art to enhance its interest. And taking it as a story, what do you think of it?"

He took up his pipe, and began, in his old accustomed

manner, to tap with it nervously upon the bars of the grate. There was a momentary stillness. Then chairs began to creak and shoes to scrape upon the carpet. I took my eyes off the Time Traveller's face, and looked round at his audience. They were in the dark, and little spots of colour swam before them. The Medical Man seemed absorbed in the contemplation of our host. The Editor was looking hard at the end of his cigar—the sixth. The Journalist fumbled for his watch. The others, as far as I remember, were motionless.

The Editor stood up with a sigh. "What a pity it is you're not a writer of stories!" he said, putting his hand on the Time Traveller's shoulder.

"You don't believe it?"

"Well——"

"I thought not."

The Time Traveller turned to us. "Where are the matches?" he said. He lit one and spoke over his pipe, puffing. "To tell you the truth . . . I hardly believe it myself. . . . And yet . . ."

His eye fell with a mute inquiry upon the withered white flowers upon the little table. Then he turned over the hand holding his pipe, and I saw he was looking at some half-healed scars on his knuckles.

The Medical Man rose, came to the lamp, and examined the flowers. "The gynæceum's odd," he said. The Psychologist leant forward to see, holding out his hand for a specimen.

"I'm hanged if it isn't a quarter to one," said the Journalist. "How shall we get home?"

"Plenty of cabs at the station," said the Psychologist.

"It's a curious thing," said the Medical Man; "but I certainly don't know the natural order of these flowers. May I have them?"

The Time Traveller hesitated. Then suddenly: "Certainly not."

"Where did you really get them?" said the Medical Man.

The Time Traveller put his hand to his head. He spoke like one who was trying to keep hold of an idea that eluded him. "They were put into my pocket by Weena, when I trav-

elled into Time." He stared round the room. "I'm damned if it isn't all going. This room and you and the atmosphere of every day are too much for my memory. Did I ever make a Time Machine, or a model of a Time Machine? Or is it all only a dream? They say life is a dream, a precious poor dream at times—but I can't stand another that won't fit. It's madness. And where did the dream come from? . . . I must look at that machine. If there *is* one!"

He caught up the lamp swiftly, and carried it, flaring red, through the door into the corridor. We followed him. There in the flickering light of the lamp was the machine sure enough, squat, ugly, and askew; a thing of brass, ebony, ivory, and translucent glimmering quartz. Solid to the touch —for I put out my hand and felt the rail of it—and with brown spots and smears upon the ivory, and bits of grass and moss upon the lower parts, and one rail bent awry.

The Time Traveller put the lamp down on the bench, and ran his hand along the damaged rail. "It's all right now," he said. "The story I told you was true. I'm sorry to have brought you out here in the cold." He took up the lamp, and, in an absolute silence, we returned to the smoking-room.

He came into the hall with us and helped the Editor on with his coat. The Medical Man looked into his face and, with a certain hesitation, told him he was suffering from overwork, at which he laughed hugely. I remember him standing in the open doorway, bawling good-night.

I shared a cab with the Editor. He thought the tale a "gaudy lie." For my own part I was unable to come to a conclusion. The story was so fantastic and incredible, the telling so credible and sober. I lay awake most of the night thinking about it. I determined to go next day and see the Time Traveller again. I was told he was in the laboratory, and being on easy terms in the house, I went up to him. The laboratory, however, was empty. I stared for a minute at the Time Machine and put out my hand and touched the lever. At that the squat, substantial-looking mass swayed like a bough shaken by the wind. Its instability startled me extremely,

and I had a queer reminiscence of the childish days when I used to be forbidden to meddle. I came back through the corridor. The Time Traveller met me in the smoking-room. He was coming from the house. He had a small camera under one arm and a knapsack under the other. He laughed when he saw me, and gave me an elbow to shake. "I'm frightfully busy," said he, "with that thing in there."

"But is it not some hoax?" I said. "Do you really travel through time?"

"Really and truly I do." And he looked frankly into my eyes. He hesitated. His eye wandered about the room. "I only want half an hour," he said, "I know why you came, and it's awfully good of you. There's some magazines here. If you'll stop to lunch I'll prove you this time travelling up to the hilt, specimen and all. If you'll forgive my leaving you now?"

I consented, hardly comprehending then the full import of his words, and he nodded and went on down the corridor. I heard the door of the laboratory slam, seated myself in a chair, and took up a daily paper. What was he going to do before lunch-time? Then suddenly I was reminded by an advertisement that I had promised to meet Richardson, the publisher, at two. I looked at my watch, and saw that I could barely save that engagement. I got up and went down the passage to tell the Time Traveller.

As I took hold of the handle of the door I heard an exclamation, oddly truncated at the end, and a click and a thud. A gust of air whirled round me as I opened the door, and from within came the sound of broken glass falling on the floor. The Time Traveller was not there. I seemed to see a ghostly, indistinct figure sitting in a whirling mass of black and brass for a moment—a figure so transparent that the bench behind with its sheets of drawings was absolutely distinct; but this phantasm vanished as I rubbed my eyes. The Time Machine had gone. Save for a subsiding stir of dust, the further end of the laboratory was empty. A pane of the skylight had, apparently, just been blown in.

I felt an unreasonable amazement. I knew that something

strange had happened, and for the moment could not distinguish what the strange thing might be. As I stood staring, the door into the garden opened, and the man-servant appeared.

We looked at each other. Then ideas began to come. "Has Mr. —— gone out that way?" said I.

"No, sir. No one has come out this way. I was expecting to find him here."

At that I understood. At the risk of disappointing Richardson I stayed on, waiting for the Time Traveller; waiting for the second, perhaps still stranger story, and the specimens and photographs he would bring with him. But I am beginning now to fear that I must wait a lifetime. The Time Traveller vanished three years ago. And, as everybody knows now, he has never returned.

EPILOGUE

One cannot choose but wonder. Will he ever return? It may be that he swept back into the past, and fell among the blood-drinking, hairy savages of the Age of Unpolished Stone; into the abysses of the Cretaceous Sea; or among the grotesque saurians, the huge reptilian brutes of the Jurassic times. He may even now—if I may use the phrase—be wandering on some plesiosaurus-haunted Oolitic coral reef, or beside the lonely saline lakes of the Triassic Age. Or did he go forward, into one of the nearer ages, in which men are still men, but with the riddles of our own time answered and its wearisome problems solved? Into the manhood of the race: for I, for my own part, cannot think that these latter days of weak experiment, fragmentary theory, and mutual discord are indeed man's culminating time! I say, for my own part. He, I know—for the question had been discussed among us long before the Time Machine was made—thought but cheerlessly of the Advancement of Mankind, and saw in the growing pile of civilisation only a foolish heaping that must inevitably fall back upon and destroy its makers in the end. If that is so, it remains for us to live as though it were not so.

But to me the future is still black and blank—is a vast ignorance, lit at a few casual places by the memory of his story. And I have by me, for my comfort, two strange white flowers—shrivelled now, and brown and flat and brittle—to witness that even when mind and strength had gone, gratitude and a mutual tenderness still lived on in the heart of man.

OUR MARK TWAIN

BY *Helen Keller*

FROM "MIDSTREAM"

PERHAPS the most remarkable woman in the world tells about her associations with Mark Twain in the years in which she won victory over a sightless and soundless world.

OUR MARK TWAIN

ONE of the most memorable events of our Wrentham years was our visit to Mark Twain.

My memory of Mr. Clemens runs back to 1894, when he was vigorous, before the shadows began to gather. Such was the affection he inspired in my young heart that my love for him has deepened with the years. More than anyone else I have ever known except Dr. Alexander Graham Bell and my teacher, he aroused in me the feeling of mingled tenderness and awe. I saw him many times at my friend Mr. Lawrence Hutton's in New York, and later in Princeton, also at Mr. H. H. Rogers's and at his own home at 21 Fifth Avenue, and last of all at Stormfield, Connecticut. Now and then I received letters from him. We were both too busy to write often, but whenever events of importance in our lives occurred we wrote to each other about them.

I was fourteen years old when I first met Mr. Clemens—one Sunday afternoon when Miss Sullivan and I were the guests of Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence Hutton in New York. During the afternoon several celebrities dropped in, and among them Mr.

Clemens. The instant I clasped his hand in mine, I knew that he was my friend. He made me laugh and feel thoroughly happy by telling some good stories, which I read from his lips. I have forgotten a great deal more than I remember, but I shall never forget how tender he was.

He knew with keen and sure intuition many things about me and how it felt to be blind and not to keep up with the swift ones—things that others learned slowly or not at all. He never embarrassed me by saying how terrible it is not to see, or how dull life must be, lived always in the dark. He wove about my dark walls romance and adventure, which made me feel happy and important. Once when Peter Dunne, the irrepressible Mr. Dooley, exclaimed: "God, how dull it must be for her, every day the same and every night the same as the day," he said, "You're damned wrong there; blindness is an exciting business, I tell you; if you don't believe it, get up some dark night on the wrong side of your bed when the house is on fire and try to find the door."

The next time I saw Mr. Clemens was in Princeton during a spring vacation when we were visiting the Huttons in their new home. We had many happy hours together at that time.

One evening in the library he lectured to a distinguished company—Woodrow Wilson was pres-

ent—on the situation in the Philippines. We listened breathlessly. He described how six hundred Moros—men, women, and children—had taken refuge in an extinct crater bowl near Jolo, where they were caught in a trap and murdered, by order of General Leonard Wood. A few days afterwards, Col. Funston captured the patriot Aguinaldo by disguising his military marauders in the uniform of the enemy and pretending to be friends of Aguinaldo's officers. Upon these military exploits, Mr. Clemens poured out a volcano of invective and ridicule. Only those who heard him can know his deep fervour and the potency of his flaming words. All his life he fought injustice wherever he saw it in the relations between man and man—in politics, in wars, in outrages against the natives of the Philippines, the Congo, and Panama. I loved his views on public affairs, they were so often the same as my own.

He thought he was a cynic, but his cynicism did not make him indifferent to the sight of cruelty, unkindness, meanness, or pretentiousness. He would often say, "Helen, the world is full of unseeing eyes, vacant, staring, soulless eyes." He would work himself into a frenzy over dull acquiescence in any evil that could be remedied. True, sometimes it seemed as if he let loose all the artillery of Heaven against an intruding mouse but even then his "resplendent

vocabulary" was a delight. Even when his ideas were quite wrong, they were expressed with such lucidity, conviction, and aggressiveness that one felt impelled to accept them—for the moment at least. One is almost persuaded to accept any idea which is well expressed.

He was interested in everything about me—my friends and little adventures and what I was writing. I loved him for his beautiful appreciation of my teacher's work. Of all the people who have written about me he is almost the only one who has realized the importance of Miss Sullivan in my life, who has appreciated her "brilliancy, penetration, wisdom, character, and the fine literary competences of her pen."

He often spoke tenderly of Mrs. Clemens and regretted that I had not known her.

"I am very lonely, sometimes, when I sit by the fire after my guests have departed," he used to say. "My thoughts trail away into the past. I think of Livy and Susie and I seem to be fumbling in the dark folds of confused dreams. I come upon memories of little intimate happenings of long ago that drop like stars into the silence. One day everything breaks and crumbles. It did the day Livy died." Mr. Clemens repeated with emotion and inexpressible tenderness the lines which he had carved on her tombstone:

Warm summer sun,
Shine kindly here;
Warm Southern wind,
Blow softly here;
Green sod above,
Lie light, lie light;
Good night, dear heart,
Good night, good night.

The year after her death he said to me, "This has been the saddest year I have ever known. If it were not that work brings forgetfulness, life would be intolerable." He expressed regret that he had not accomplished more. I exclaimed, "Why, Mr. Clemens, the whole world has crowned you. Already your name is linked with the greatest names in our history. Bernard Shaw compares your work with that of Voltaire, and Kipling has called you the American Cervantes."

"Ah, Helen, you have a honeyed tongue; but you don't understand. I have only amused people. Their laughter has submerged me."

There are writers who belong to the history of their nation's literature. Mark Twain is one of them. When we think of great Americans we think of him. He incorporated the age he lived in. To me he symbolizes the pioneer qualities—the large, free, unconventional, humorous point of view of men who sail new seas and blaze new trails through the wil-

derness. Mark Twain and the Mississippi River are inseparable in my mind. When I told him that *Life on the Mississippi* was my favourite story of adventure, he said, "That amazes me. It wouldn't have occurred to me that a woman would find such rough reading interesting. But I don't know much about women. It would be impossible for a person to know less about women than I do."

After some badinage back and forth about women, Mr. Clemens's manner changed. A sadness came into his voice. "Those were glorious days, the days on the Mississippi. They will come back no more, life has swallowed them up, and youth will come no more. They were days when the tide of life was high, when the heart was full of the sparkling wine of romance. There have been no other days like them."

It was just after he had read my book *The World I Live In,* that he sent a note to Wrentham saying, "I command you all three to come and spend a few days with me in Stormfield."

It was indeed the summons of a beloved king. His carriage met us at Redding station. If my memory serves me, it was in February; there was a light snow upon the Connecticut hills. It was a glorious five mile drive to Stormfield; little icicles hung from the edges of the leaves and there was a tang in the air of cedar and pine. We drove rapidly along the winding country roads, the horses were in high spirits.

Mr. Macy kept reading signboards bearing the initials "M. T." As we approached the Italian villa on the very top of the hill, they told me he was standing on the verandah waiting. As the carriage rolled between the huge granite pillars, he waved his hand; they told me he was all in white and that his beautiful white hair glistened in the afternoon sunshine like the snow spray on the gray stones.

There was a bright fire on the hearth, and we breathed in the fragrance of pine and the orange pekoe tea. I scolded Mr. Clemens a little for coming out on the verandah without his hat; there was still a winter chill in the air. He seemed pleased that I thought about him in that way, and said rather wistfully, "It is not often these days that anyone notices when I am imprudent."

We were in the land of enchantment. We sat by the fire and had our tea and buttered toast and he insisted that I must have strawberry jam on my toast. We were the only guests. Miss Lyon, Mr. Clemens's secretary, presided over the tea table.

Mr. Clemens asked me if I would like to see the house, remarking that people found it more interesting than himself.

Out of the living room there was a large sunny, beautiful loggia, full of living plants and great jardinières filled with wild grasses, cat-tails, goldenrod, and thistles which had been gathered on the hills in

the late fall. We returned through the living room to the dining room and out on to the pergola and back again to the house and into the billiard room, where Mr. Clemens said he spent his happiest hours. He was passionately fond of billiards, and very proud of the billiard table with which Mrs. H. H. Rogers had presented him. He said he would teach me to play.

I answered, "Oh, Mr. Clemens, it takes sight to play billiards."

"Yes," he teased, "but not the variety of billiards that Paine and Dunne and Rogers play. The blind couldn't play worse." Then upstairs to see Mr. Clemens's bedroom and examine the carved bedposts and catch a glimpse of the view out of the great windows before darkness closed in upon us.

"Try to picture, Helen, what we are seeing out of these windows. We are high up on a snow-covered hill. Beyond, are dense spruce and firwoods, other snow-clad hills and stone walls intersecting the landscape everywhere, and over all, the white wizardry of winter. It is a delight, this wild, free, fir-scented place."

Our suite of rooms was next to his. On the mantelpiece, suspended from a candlestick, was a card explaining to burglars where articles of value were in the room. There had recently been a burglary in the

house, and Mr. Clemens explained that this was a precaution against being disturbed by intruders.

"Before I leave you," he said, "I want to show you Clara's room; it is the most beautiful apartment in the house."

He was not content until he had shown us the servants' quarters, and he would have taken us to the attic if Miss Lyon had not suggested that we leave it for another day. It was obvious that Mr. Clemens took great satisfaction in his unusual house. He told us that it had been designed by the son of my life-long friend, William Dean Howells. Delightfully he pointed out that the architecture was exactly suited to the natural surroundings, that the dark cedars and pines, which were always green, made a singularly beautiful setting for the white villa. Mr. Clemens particularly enjoyed the sunlight that came through the great windows and the glimpse of field and sky that could be seen through them.

"You observe," he said to us, "there are no pictures on the walls. Pictures in this house would be an impertinence. No artist, going to this window and looking out, has ever equalled that landscape."

We stayed in our room till dinner was announced. Dinner in Mr. Clemens's house was always a function where conversation was important; yes, more important than the food. It was a rule in that house that guests were relieved of the responsibility of con-

versation. Mr. Clemens said that his personal experience had taught him that you could not enjoy your dinner if the burden of finding something to say was weighing heavily upon you. He made it a rule, he said, to do all the talking in his own house, and expected when he was invited out that his hosts would do the same. He talked delightfully, audaciously, brilliantly. His talk was fragrant with tobacco and flamboyant with profanity. I adored him because he did not temper his conversation to any femininity. He was a playboy sometimes and on occasions liked to show off. He had a natural sense of the dramatic, and enjoyed posing as he talked. But in the core of him there was no make-believe. He never attempted to hide his light under a bushel. I think it was Goethe who said, "Only clods are modest." If that is true, then in the world there was not less of a clod than Mr. Clemens.

He ate very little himself, and invariably grew restless before the dinner was finished. He would get up in the midst of a sentence, walk round the table or up and down the long dining room, talking all the while. He would stop behind my chair, and ask me if there was anything I wanted; he would sometimes take a flower from a vase and if I happened to be able to identify it he showed his pleasure by describing in an exaggerated manner the powers that lie latent in our faculties, declaring that the ordinary

human being had not scratched the surface of his brain. This line of observation usually led to a tirade upon the appalling stupidity of all normal human beings. Watching my teacher spelling to me, he drawled, "Can you spell into Helen's left hand and tell her the truth?" Sometimes the butler called his attention to a tempting dish, and he would sit down and eat.

To test my powers of observation, he would leave the room quietly and start the self-playing organ in the living room. My teacher told me how amusing it was to see him steal back to the dining room and watch stealthily for any manifestations on my part that the vibrations had reached my feet. I did not often feel the musical vibrations, as I believe the floor was tiled, which prevented the sound waves from reaching me, but I did sometimes feel the chord vibrations through the table. I was always glad when I did, because it made Mr. Clemens so happy.

We gathered about the warm hearth after dinner, and Mr. Clemens stood with his back to the fire talking to us. There he stood—our Mark Twain, our American, our humorist, the embodiment of our country. He seemed to have absorbed all America into himself. The great Mississippi River seemed forever flowing, flowing through his speech, through the shadowless white sands of thought. His voice seemed to say like the river, "Why hurry? Eternity

is long; the ocean can wait." In reply to some expression of our admiration for the spaciousness and the beauty of the room, which was a combination of living room and library, he said with more enthusiasm than was his wont, "It suits me perfectly. I shall never live anywhere else in this world."

He was greatly interested when we told him that a friend of ours, Mr. W. S. Booth, had discovered an acrostic in the plays, sonnets, and poems usually attributed to Shakespeare, which revealed the author to be Francis Bacon. He was at first sceptical and inclined to be facetious at our expense. He attacked the subject vigorously, yet less than a month elapsed before he brought out a new book, *Is Shakespeare Dead?* in which he set out, with all his fire, to destroy the Shakespeare legend, but not, he said in a letter to me, with any hope of actually doing it.

"I wrote the booklet for pleasure—*not* in the expectation of convincing anybody that Shakespeare did not write Shakespeare. And don't you," he warned me, "write in any such expectation. Shakespeare, the Stratford tradesman, will still be the divine Shakespeare to our posterity a thousand years hence."

When the time came to say good night, Mr. Clemens led me to my room himself and told me that I would find cigars and a thermos bottle with Scotch whiskey, or Bourbon if I preferred it, in the

bathroom. He told me that he spent the morning in bed writing, that his guests seldom saw him before lunch time, but if I felt like coming in to see him about ten-thirty, he would be delighted, for there were some things he would like to say to me when my Guardian Angel was not present.

About ten o'clock the next morning, he sent for me. He liked to do his literary work in bed, propped up among his snowy pillows looking very handsome in his dressing gown of rich silk, dictating his notes to a stenographer. He said if doing my work that way appealed to me, I might have half the bed, provided I maintained strict neutrality and did not talk. I told him the price was prohibitive, I could never yield woman's only prerogative, great as the temptation was.

It was a glorious bright day, and the sun streamed through the great windows. Mr. Clemens said if I did not feel inclined to work after lunch (which was by way of sarcasm, as he had previously remarked that I did not look industrious, and he believed that I had somebody to write my books for me), he would take a little walk with us and show us the "farm." He said he would not join us at lunch, as his doctor had put him on a strict diet. He appeared, however, just as dessert was being served. He said he had smelt the apple pie and could not resist. Miss Lyon protested timidly.

"Oh, Mr. Clemens——"

"Yes, I know; but fresh apple pie never killed anybody. But if Helen says I can't, I won't." I did not have the heart to say he couldn't, so we compromised on a very small piece, which was later augmented by a larger piece, after a pantomimic warning to the others not to betray him.

I suspected what was going on, and said, "Come, let us go before Mr. Clemens sends to the kitchen for another pie."

He said, "Tell her I suspected she was a psychic. That proves she is."

He put on a fur-lined greatcoat and fur cap, filled his pockets with cigars, and declared himself ready to start on the walk. He led me through the pergola, stopping to let me feel the cedars which stood guard at every step.

"The arches were intended for ramblers," he said, "but unfortunately they haven't bloomed this winter. I have spoken to the gardener about it, and I hope the next time you come we shall have roses blooming for you." He picked out a winding path which he thought I could follow easily. It was a delightful path, which lay between rocks and a saucy little brook that winter had not succeeded in binding with ice fetters. He asked Mr. Macy to tell me there was a tall white building across an intervening valley from where we were standing. "Tell her it's a church.

It used to stand on this side of the brook; but the congregation moved it last summer when I told them I had no use for it. I had no idea that New England people were so accommodating. At that distance it is just what a church should be—serene and pure and mystical." We crossed the brook on a little rustic footbridge. He said it was a prehistoric bridge, and that the quiet brown pool underneath was the one celebrated in the Song of Solomon. I quoted the passage he referred to: "Thine eyes like the fishpools in Heshbon, by the gate of Bath-rabbim." It was a joy being with him, holding his hand as he pointed out each lovely spot and told some charming untruth about it. He said, "The book of earth is wonderful. I wish I had time to read it. I think if I had begun in my youth, I might have got through the first chapter. But it's too late to do anything about it now."

We wandered on and on, forgetful of time and distance, beguiled by stream and meadow and seductive stone walls wearing their antumn draperies of red and gold vines a little dimmed by rain and snow, but still exquisitely beautiful. When we turned at last, and started to climb the hill, Mr. Clemens paused and stood gazing over the frosty New England valley, and said, "Age is like this, we stand on the summit and look back over the distance and time. Alas, how swift are the feet of the days of the years of youth." We realized that he was very tired.

Mr. Macy suggested that he should return cross-lots and meet us on the road with a carriage. Mr. Clemens thought this a good idea, and agreed to pilot Mrs. Macy and me to the road, which he had every reason to suppose was just beyond that elephant of a hill. Our search for that road was a wonderful and fearsome adventure. It led through cow-paths, across ditches filled with ice-cold water into fields dotted with little islands of red and gold which rose gently out of the white snow. On closer inspection we found that they were composed of patches of dry goldenrod and huckleberry bushes. We picked our way through treacherously smiling cart roads. He said, "Every path leading out of this jungle dwindles into a squirrel track and runs up a tree." The cart roads proved to be ruts that ensnared our innocent feet. Mr. Clemens had the wary air of a discoverer as he turned and twisted between spreading branches of majestic pines and dwarfed hazel bushes. I remarked that we seemed to be away off our course. He answered, "This is the uncharted wilderness. We have wandered into the chaos that existed before Jehovah divided the waters from the land. The road is just over there," he asserted with conviction. "Yes," we murmured faintly, wondering how we should ever ford the roaring, tumbling imp of a stream which flung itself at us out of the hills.

There was no doubt about it. The road was just there "where you see that rail fence." Prophecy deepened into happy certainty when we saw Mr. Macy and the coachman waiting for us. "Stay where you are," they shouted. In a few seconds they had dismembered the rail fence and were transporting it over the field. It did not take them long to construct a rough bridge, over which we safely crossed the Redding Rubicon, and sure enough, there was the narrow road of civilization winding up the hillside between stone walls and clustering sumachs and wild cherry trees on which little icicles were beginning to form like pendants. Half way down the drive Miss Lyon met us with tearful reproaches. Mr. Clemens mumbled weakly, "It has happened again—the woman tempted me."

I think I never enjoyed a walk more. Sweet is the memory of hours spent with a beloved companion. Even being lost with Mr. Clemens was delightful, although I was terribly distressed that he should be exerting himself beyond his strength. He said many beautiful things about Stormfield, for instance, "It is my Heaven. Its repose stills my restlessness. The view from every point is superb and perpetually changes from miracle to miracle, yet nature never runs short of new beauty and charm." I hope the report is not true that he came to hate the place and

feel that he had been defrauded of the society of his fellow men. But I can understand that a temperament like Mr. Clemens's would grow weary of the solitude.

The last evening of our visit we sat around a blazing log fire, and Mr. Clemens asked me if I would like to have him read me "Eve's Diary." Of course I was delighted.

He asked, "How shall we manage it?"

"Oh, you will read aloud, and my teacher will spell your words into my hand."

He murmured, "I had thought you would read my lips."

"I should like to, of course; but I am afraid you will find it very wearisome. We'll start that way anyhow, and if it doesn't work, we'll try the other way." This was an experience, I am sure, no other person in the world had ever had.

"You know, Mr. Clemens," I reminded him, "that we are going home to-morrow, and you promised to put on your Oxford robe for me before I went."

"So I did, Helen, and I will—I will do it now before I forget."

Miss Lyon brought the gorgeous scarlet robe which he had worn when England's oldest university conferred upon him the degree of Doctor of Letters. He put it on, and stood there in the fire light the embodiment of gracious majesty. He seemed pleased

that I was impressed. He drew me towards him and kissed me on the brow, as a cardinal or pope or feudal monarch might have kissed a little child.

How I wish I could paint the picture of that evening! Mr. Clemens sat in his great armchair, dressed in his white serge suit, the flaming scarlet robe draping his shoulders, and his white hair gleaming and glistening in the light of the lamp which shone down on his head. In one hand he held "Eve's Diary" in a glorious red cover. In the other hand he held his pipe. "If it gets in the way," he said, "I'll give it up, but I feel embarrassed without it." I sat down near him in a low chair, my elbow on the arm of his chair, so that my fingers could rest lightly on his lips. Mr. Macy lighted his cigar, and the play began. Everything went smoothly for a time. I had no difficulty getting the words from his lips. His pleasant drawl was music to my touch, but when he began gesticulating with his pipe, the actors in the drama got mixed up with the properties and there was confusion until the ashes were gathered into the fireplace. Then a new setting was arranged. Mrs. Macy came and sat beside me and spelled the words into my right hand, while I looked at Mr. Clemens with my left, touching his face and hands and the book, following his gestures and every changing expression. As the reading proceeded, we became utterly absorbed in the wistful, tender chronicle of our first

parents. Surely the joy, the innocence, the opening mind of childhood are among life's most sacred mysteries, and if young Eve laughs she makes creation all the sweeter for her Heaven-born merriment. The beauty of Mr. Clemens's voice, when Eve sighed her love, and when Adam stood at her grave grieving bitterly saying "wheresoever she was, there was Eden" caused me to weep openly, and the others swallowed audibly. Every one of us felt the yearning homesickness in that cry of pain.

To one hampered and circumscribed as I am it was a wonderful experience to have a friend like Mr. Clemens. I recall many talks with him about human affairs. He never made me feel that my opinions were worthless, as so many people do. He knew that we do not think with eyes and ears, and that our capacity for thought is not measured by five senses. He kept me always in mind while he talked, and he treated me like a competent human being. That is why I loved him.

Perhaps my strongest impression of him was that of sorrow. There was about him the air of one who had suffered greatly. Whenever I touched his face his expression was sad, even when he was telling a funny story. He smiled, not with the mouth but with his mind—a gesture of the soul rather than of the face. His voice was truly wonderful. To my touch, it was deep, resonant. He had the power of modulating

it so as to suggest the most delicate shades of meaning and he spoke so deliberately that I could get almost every word with my fingers on his lips. Ah, how sweet and poignant the memory of his soft slow speech playing over my listening fingers. His words seemed to take strange lovely shapes on my hands. His own hands were wonderfully mobile and changeable under the influence of emotion. It has been said that life has treated me harshly; and sometimes I have complained in my heart because many pleasures of human experience have been withheld from me, but when I recollect the treasure of friendship that has been bestowed upon me I withdraw all charges against life. If much has been denied me, much, very much has been given me. So long as the memory of certain beloved friends lives in my heart I shall say that life is good.

The affluence of Mr. Clemens's mind impressed me vividly. His felicitous words gushed from it with the abundance of the Shasta Falls. Humour was on the surface, but in the centre of his nature was a passion for truth, harmony, beauty.

Once he remarked in his pensive, cynical way, "There is so little in life that is not pretence."

"There is beauty, Mr. Clemens."

"Yes, there is beauty, and beauty is the seed of spirit from which we grow the flowers that shall endure."

I did not realize until I began this sketch how extremely difficult it would be to recapture Mr. Clemens's happy phrases from my memory. I am afraid I should not have succeeded at all if I had not made a few notes after my conversation with him. But I believe I have never falsified a word or an emphasis of the spirit of his utterances.

Time passed at Stormfield as it passes everywhere else, and the day came when we had to say good-bye. The kindly white figure stood on the verandah waving us farewell, as he had waved his welcome when we arrived. Silently we watched the stately villa on the white hilltop fading into the purple distance. We said to each other sadly, "Shall we ever see him again?" And we never did. But we three knew that we had a picture of him in our hearts which would remain there forever. In my fingertips was graven the image of his dear face with its halo of shining white hair, and in my memory his drawling, marvellous voice will always vibrate.

I have visited Stormfield since Mark Twain's death. The flowers still bloom; the breezes still whisper and sough in the cedars, which have grown statelier year by year; the birds still sing, they tell me. But for me the place is bereft of its lover. The last time I was there, the house was in ruins. Only the great chimney was standing, a charred pile of bricks in the bright autumn landscape.

As I sat on the step where he had stood with me one day, my hand warm in his, thoughts of him, like shadowy presences, came and went, sweet with memory and with regret. Then I fancied I felt someone approaching me; I reached out, and a red geranium blossom met my touch! The leaves of the plant were covered with ashes, and even the sturdy stalk had been partly broken off by a chip of falling plaster. But there was the bright flower smiling at me out of the ashes. I thought it said to me, "Please don't grieve." I brought the plant home and set it in a sunny corner of my garden, where always it seems to say the same thing to me, "Please don't grieve." But I grieve, nevertheless.

HOW TO WORK UP A PANIC

An Episode in the Life of Daniel Drew

BY *Bouck White*

FROM "THE BOOK OF DANIEL DREW"

UNCLE DANIEL himself tells how he and Jay Gould and Jubilee Jim Fiske cornered greenbacks, turned bears-in-bulls'-clothing, and precipitated a market crash in a time of "fundamentally sound" business when panics were really panics.

I SOMETIMES wish I had stayed in the steamboat business and let Wall Street alone. I'd have made money in a more steady way and without the risk. Steamboats are not so liable to ups and downs as stocks are. And at this time I was earning from my steamboats alone enough money to have made me in time a man of comfortable means.

But the trouble with business of that kind is, there are so many little things to look after, which keep you on the go well-nigh all the time. Because the profits from a business line are made up of a lot of small profits; and each detail is liable to leak money unless you look out.

For instance, there was the one item of the bar, on my steamboats. Going into the bar one day on the steamboat *Drew*, who should I see there but the Captain of the boat taking a drink. I was going to be mad at first, and stood watching him in order to think what I should do. He stood very cool, finished his glass, put it down, and then paid the bartender a quarter. When I saw that, I wasn't so mad.

"Do the employees on the boat pay every time they get anything from the bar?" I asked.

"Always," said he; "at least I do. In fact, Mr. Drew, I find it a very good way to keep in check a natural propensity of mine which might otherwise grow into something inconvenient." I was glad to know that he always paid; but the incident merely shows the many leaks that could occur in a business as big as this steamboat business of mine, if a fellow were to follow it up as a life pursuit.

Then, also, there is the bother which small business matters bring you. I had a lawsuit hanging over my head for years over the sale of the steamboat, *Francis Skiddy*. It belonged to the line which went from New York to Troy. I sold it to the People's Line. In reality I was buyer and seller too. Because I owned a controlling interest in both lines, and so could make the seller sell, and the buyer buy. Well, some of the smaller *Skiddy* stock-holders got mad at the transaction and sued me for damages. Because on the last trip of that boat, just before she was going to be delivered to the People's Line, she ran on a rock off of Statt's Landing, and ripped a hole in her bottom sixteen feet long and three planks wide. This, of course, lowered now by a good deal the selling value of the boat. And yet gave me the thing I wanted out of her, the engine. This was still undamaged, and could now be transferred into another boat, and at a reasonable figure. I

had been wanting the *Skiddy* engine for this other boat a long time back. I gave out that her running on the rocks just at this time when the sale was about to be made, was an accident which I hadn't had anything to do with. But her stock-holders made a big fuss. They went into court and sued me for sixty thousand dollars. The thing dragged and dragged, and now finally the court has made me pay it. It merely shows the vexations of spirit that come when you are in a business line.

I like Wall Street because you stand a chance of making money there so much faster than you can in the slow-poke ways of regular business. One turn of two or three points in shares will, if you are on the right side and have put out a big enough line, net you as much money in six days as an ordinary business would in six months. By this time I had got so that I knew all the ins and outs of Wall Street. There are trade secrets in every calling. The newcomer is always at a discount compared to the old veteran. I found that many times now I could turn this expert knowledge of mine to account. One morning, I remember, I was riding down to the Street in the carriage of a young stock operator who had taken me in with him, to save paying fare in the Broadway stage. He knew that I was on the inside of some of the big stock-market operations, and he thought he might get some inside tips. I had looked for something of the sort to occur. It's a

caution the way outsiders hang around people who are on the inside. The flies get at you when you're covered with honey. Whilst we were driving down Broadway he pumped and pumped; but I was as dumb as a heifer. I made believe there were big things just then under way which we, who were on the inside, didn't want other people to get onto.

Well, when we reached the Street, and he had got the carriage stopped in front of my office, I opened the door and stepped out. In doing so, I contrived to bump my hat against the top of the doorway. It was a black felt hat. (I like black felt for a hat. It's so durable. You can wear one several years before it begins to show signs of wear.) My hat fell off, and some pieces of paper fell out. On those pieces of paper I had written what seemed to be orders to my brokers: "Buy 500 Erie, at 68." "Buy 1,000 at 67." "Buy 2,000 Erie at the market." "Buy 3,000 Erie at 67½," and such-like. Of course, as they spread over the floor of the carriage, he or any one else couldn't help but see what they were, and read them. I made believe I was awfully put out to have the secret given away like that. I made a scramble as though to gather them up before any one should see them; then I said good-bye and went into my office.

I calculated he would most likely act on the hint. And he did. He drove rapidly to his office. He told his crowd of the discovery he had made. "A

big Bulling movement in Erie is on! The old man" (that's what they sometimes called me) "is buying Erie! A campaign is under way. Boys, we must get in on this!" So he bought a block of five thousand shares of Erie. The rest of his crowd followed him. Their combined buying forced Erie up point after point.

That was what I had been looking for. I had been wanting for some time back to find a buyer for some of my surplus stock. Now it was coming my way fine. I immediately dumped onto the market all the Erie it would stand. I succeeded in disposing of a large share of my holdings at the top figure. Then of course the market broke. It sagged four points in the next two days. My broker friend and his crowd were badly caught. He came to me with a face as long as your arm; said how he had been led to believe that there was going to be an upward movement in Erie; he had bought heavily; and now it had all gone to smash. "Uncle, what in the world shall I do?"

I told him he could do anything he pleased. And I couldn't keep from chuckling at the fine way I had got him to gobble the bait. In fact I always did like a joke. So much so that they got to calling me the "Merry Old Gentleman of Wall Street." They had other names for me, too; such as, "the Speculative Director," "the Big Bear," "the Old Man of the Street" and so on. Some of these

names I didn't like. But "the Merry Old Gentleman" — I kind of liked that. I believe in being merry when you can. A good chuckle, when you've got a fellow in a tight box and you watch him squirm this way and that, does more good than a dose of medicine.

As to this particular Erie deal, by thus making a market for my shares, I cleaned up a fine profit. That merely shows how an operator, if he is onto the tricks of the trade and has natural ingenuity besides, can make business in a sick market, where a newcomer would have to sit and twiddle his thumbs.

I have always had a natural bent for stock-market dickers. I suppose it's because I have been sort of humble in my manner. That puts people off their guard. (I never was proud, anyhow. People used to say: You couldn't tell from Dan Drew's clothing but what he was a butcher in a Third Avenue shop. But I let them talk. You can't tell a horse by his harness. And I have always thought a man should have more in his pocket than on his back.) I have found a spirit of humility very helpful. It makes the man you're dealing with think he is winding you around his finger; whereas you are the one who is doing the winding.

That's how I got the best of a lawyer friend of mine once. He was a young fellow. I had him do some legal work for me. He did it. Then he sent in a bill. It seemed an almighty big fee to ask for just

a few months' work. I paid it. But I made up my mind I'd get it back. And I did. I was talking with him not long after. I turned the conversation to Wall Street matters.

"Sonny," said I, "you won that lawsuit for me, and I've taken a kind of liking to you. I want to help you. We fellows on the inside sometimes know what's going to happen in stock-market affairs before other people. It's my advice to you to take some of your spare cash, all the money you can lay your hands on, in fact, and buy Erie stock."

He held off. He said that his business was law and not the stock-market. He believed that a shoemaker should stick to his lasts. Fair words made him look to his purse. And such-like.

"Now, son," said I, "do as I say. I knew your father. And because of that friendship, I feel a kind of interest in you. I want to see you get a start. You buy Erie. Buy all you can of it, at the present market price. Trust me, you'll never be sorry." He thought for a while. He said he guessed he'd try the thing for once.

That was what I'd been waiting for. I went out and immediately gave orders to my brokers to sell all the Erie they could. Soon the ticker told me that my brokers were finding a buyer for the Erie they were offering. I thought I could give a pretty shrewd guess as to who was the buyer. I supplied him with all he would take. By the time

the market broke, I had saddled him with enough Erie at a good high figure to sluice from his pocket into mine all of that fee which he had scooped out of me just a few weeks before. I now called the account even.

XXXII

FOR a spell after settling up with the Commodore at the close of the Erie War, I got out of Wall Street. I was by this time over my scriptural allowance of three score years and ten. I thought I had earned a rest. I figured that I had made my wad, and now should begin to enjoy it.

> Let worldly minds the world pursue;
> It has no charms for me.
> Once I admired its trifles, too,
> But grace has set me free.

I seemed to myself to be now in a quiet harbour, like that fine big bay that dents in from the Hudson River at Fishkill. I could look out from that safe retreat onto the human vessels that were tossing in the billows outside. "From every stormy wind that blows" — that has always been a favourite hymn of mine. And that other tune, too:

> Oh, Beulah Land, Sweet Beulah Land,
> Where on the highest mount I stand;
> I look away across the sea,
> Where mansions are prepared for me,
> And view the shining glorious shore,
> My heaven, my home forever more.

But after two or three months of nothing to do, I kind of got tired of resting. I saw Gould and Fisk making money in Erie hand over fist, and I hankered to get back. I wanted to stick a finger in that pudding, so to speak. They had taken Bill Tweed and Pete Sweeney into the Board of Directors. This was giving them such a fine pull with the law courts and the New York City authorities that they could do most anything they wanted to, and not be troubled with suits or legal technicalities. Tweed became a director of the railroad, "to get square with Erie," as he put it. For he was still nettled over those old losses in Erie speckilations which he said I had caused him, and now he vowed he was going to get it back — was going to take it out of the road, no matter what it cost her. When I had got out of Erie at the time of our settlement with Vanderbilt, I figured that in taking my pay in cash and leaving Fisk and Gould the road, I had got the best end of the bargain. I was chuckling to myself to think how I had taken the horse, so to speak, and had left them holding onto the halter. But Jay's words were proving true. And although Erie seemed a badly waterlogged craft, there was a lot of service left in her yet. Therefore I wanted to get back on board, so to speak.

At the time of that settlement, a little feeling had arisen between me and the other two, Jay and Jimmy. But personal feelings don't count in Wall

Street. Operators can swear everlasting vengeance on each other one day, and be thick as molasses before sundown the next. In financial circles, it's the money that counts. No matter how mad you may be at a fellow, if you need his money you make up with him easy as anything. Erie was still a money-maker. So I wanted to get on the inside once more. If I could have another turn or two at the milking stool, so to speak, I felt I'd be willing to retire from active business altogether. Accordingly, before the summer was over, I was calling on Gould and Fisk, and they were coming to see me, just as though we hadn't had any differences at all. Before I knew it, I was back in the thick of things, and busy as a pup.

We now set out on a Bear campaign — we three, Gould, Fisk and I. Being backed by Tweed and his political crowd, it promised big returns. But it required a lot of nerve. In fact, before it was through, it raised more excitement than I had bargained for. It was the Lock-up of greenbacks.

It seemed a foolhardy thing to do — go short of stocks just at that particular time. Because it was the fall of the year. The Government reports showed that bumper crops were to be harvested in nearly all parts of the country. A big traffic from the West to the seaboard was promised. The election of General Grant as president was almost a settled thing; and if he was elected, the policy of

the Government would be an immediate resumption of specie payment. Money was easy as an old shoe. When money is easy, stocks go up. Because at such times people have got the means to margin large holdings and so are hopeful and Bullish. It was about the last time in the world, one would have said, to begin a Bear campaign. But that's really just the time in which to begin it. Because the way to make money in Wall Street, if you are an insider, is to calculate on what the common people are going to do, and then go and do just the opposite. When everybody is Bullish, that is just the time when you can make the most money as a Bear, if you work it right. And we of our little clique thought we could work it right.

When money is easy the public buys stocks, and so the prices go up. The way to do, we calculated, would be to make money tight. Then people would sell, prices would go down, and we could cover our short contracts at a fine low figure. In this work of making money tight we were helped by one fact. The Government, in order to resume specie payments, had adopted a policy of contracting the amount of greenbacks in circulation. It was refusing to reissue greenback notes after it had once got them back into its vaults.

But that wasn't enough to tighten the currency to the point where it would serve our ends. So we set about working it ourselves. For this purpose

we made a pool of money to the amount of fourteen millions. Fisk and Gould provided ten millions, and I agreed to put in four millions.

The banks, as everybody knows, are required by law to keep as reserve twenty-five per cent. of their deposits. This is in order to take care of their depositors. When their cash on hand is over and above this twenty-five per cent. margin, bankers loan money free and easy. As soon as their cash begins to creep down to the twenty-five per cent. limit — which can almost be called the dead line — bankers begin to get the cold shivers; they tighten their rates, and if the need is urgent enough, call in their outstanding loans. Knowing this we made our plans accordingly. We would put all of our cash into the form of deposits in the banks. Against these deposits we would write checks and get the banks to certify them. The banks would have to tie up enough funds to take care of these certifications. With the certified checks as collateral we would borrow greenbacks — and then withdraw them suddenly from circulation.

When our arrangements were complete, we went onto the stock market and sold shares heavily short. People thought we were fools, because of all the signs pointing to a big revival of trade. Soon these contracts of ours matured. We held a council. We decided that the time had come to explode our bomb. So all of a sudden we called upon the banks

for our greenbacks. I remember well the scared look that came over the face of one banker when I made the demand. At first he didn't understand.

"Oh, yes," said he, after I had made my request; "you wish to withdraw your deposits from our bank? Of course, we can accomodate you. We shall take measures to get your account straightened up in the next few days."

"The next few days won't do," said I; "we must have it right away."

"Right away!" he said. "What do you mean?"

"I mean," said I, "within the next fifteen minutes."

He began to turn white. "Do you understand that a sudden demand of this kind was altogether unlooked for, and will occasion a great deal of needless hardship? A wait on your part of only a very short time would permit us to straighten out the whole affair without injustice to our other depositors and clients."

"I'm not in business," I said, "for the benefit of your other depositors and clients. I've got to look out for number one."

"So I perceive," he said; "and I suspect that you are willing to look out for that person quite regardless of other 'number ones' that are scattered somewhat thickly through human society. However, we will probably have to do your bidding. I will see what help we can get from some of the other banks."

As soon as he began to communicate with the other banks, his alarm increased. Because he found that their funds were being called on in the same way as his own (we were calling in the greenbacks from our chain of banks all to once). Then he got to work in good earnest. Because our fourteen millions (through the working of that law of a twenty-five per cent. reserve), meant a contracting of the currency to four times that amount, or fifty-six millions in all, besides the certifications. He called a hasty council of the officers of the bank. He ordered them to make up my greenbacks into a bundle, for me to take out to the carriage which I had brought along with me for that purpose. I started to thank him, but he seemed too busy to notice me. Messengers were being sent out on the double-quick to all the brokers who were customers of the bank, notifying them they were to return their borrowings to the bank at once.

As each of these brokers found his loans being suddenly called by the banks, he sent word in turn to his clients that they must put up the money themselves to carry their holdings of stock. Because the public in buying shares don't pay for them outright; they only pay a margin, say of ten per cent. The broker, therefore, has to put up the other ninety per cent., which he borrows from the banks, and charges his customers the interest.

The customers immediately sent back word to

the brokers: "We haven't anywheres near the cash to pay for our stocks outright. Borrow from the banks, even though you have to pay ten per cent. interest."

"But we can't get money at ten per cent.," answered the brokers.

"Then pay fifteen," said the customers.

"But we can't get it at fifteen," came the answer. "The rates for money have gone up to 160 per cent. There's a terrible tightening. No one was looking for it. We've got to have the cash, or we can't carry your stocks a moment longer."

"Then let the stocks go," came back the last answer; "throw them on the market, and do it before anybody else begins."

You can imagine, when a thousand people begin to sell, what a slump takes place. The money market is the key to the stock market. They who control the money rate control also the stock rate. Stocks began to tumble right and left. Many stop-loss orders were uncovered. Prices sagged point after point — thirty points in all. And every point meant one dollar in our pockets for every share we were dealing in.

People everywhere began to curse us. The air round about us three men was fire and sulphur. Men couldn't get money to carry on their business. Merchant princes, who had inherited the business from their fathers through several generations, lost

it now in a night. This was the time of the year when ordinarily money would flow out to the South and West to pay the farmers for the crops which they had been working all spring and summer to bring to harvest. But now that money couldn't flow, and so these farmers in a dozen states also began to hurl their curses at us. Many of them had been counting on the money from their crops to pay off mortgages. Some were driven from their homes, and their houses sold.

In fact, the curses got so loud after a while that I kind of got scared. I hadn't thought the thing would kick up such a rumpus. It almost looked as though our lives weren't safe. They might burn down my house over my head, or stab me on a street corner. So I got out of the thing. My shirt fits close, but my skin fits closer. I told Gould and Fisk that I wasn't going to be with them in this lock-up deal any longer — my life was too precious. If they chose to be dare-devils and stand out against a whole country rising up in wrath against them, they could do it. But for my part I was going to make my peace with my fellow men. So I released the money I was hoarding, and was glad to be out of the thing at last.

XXXIII

EVEN though I drew out of this lock-up deal, I got a good share of the blame. In fact, people seemed to curse me more than they did Gould and Fisk; because they said these other two were younger — were pupils of mine. And that I was chargeable for getting them into these plundersome habits, as they called it. If I had ever cared much for the speech of people, I suppose I'd have taken the thing to heart.

But I never cared what people were saying, so long as they didn't do anything but talk. Talking doesn't hurt. You can pass it by. This locking-up of greenbacks had netted us so fine a penny that we could afford to stand a lot of abuse. Besides, the people whose money we had got were not able to get back at us. We were protected from law-suits by means of our standing in with Tweed and his crowd. We were also able, because of this political influence, to show the people who were all the time reviling us that we were pretty powerful in New York City and were not to be abused.

There, for instance, was that man Bowles, who owned a sheet up in Springfield. He had been

picking at me and my Erie crowd for a long time back. A lot of the newspapers, anyhow, were now beginning to snarl and snap at us: — "Erie Rascalities," "National Infamy," "Railroad Burglary," "Drew at the Head of a Piratical Horde of Plunderers" — what not! One of them, a Bill Bryant, editor of the *New York Post*, got what he deserved. Tweed's Judge, Barnard, right from the judge's bench, called him, "the most notorious liar in the United States." And now this other fellow, Bowles, was also to be taken down a peg or two. For Bowles had come out with a pitchfork article against us, and against Jimmy in particular. This time he went too far, and we hit back. Jimmy was the last one of us, anyhow, whom they ought to have hit. Because he stood in with Tweed and his crowd even more than Gould or I.

So one day soon after, this man Bowles was down in New York City, attending a meeting of the New England Society at the Fifth Avenue Hotel. He was standing in the hotel office. There he was approached by Jack McGowan, the deputy sheriff, and another. One of them passed on beyond Bowles, then turned, seized him by the arms, and began to shove him towards the street door, whilst the other held a paper in his face, a warrant for his arrest. Once in the street, they pushed him into a carriage which was in waiting, and drove rapidly to the Ludlow Street Jail. This was eight o'clock

at night. Bail was fixed at fifty thousand dollars. Bowles had so many friends that he could probably have raised it. But all the details had been arranged so thoroughly that now the sheriff's office was closed for the night; and so bail couldn't be received. Bowles asked a friend to carry the news of his arrest to his wife, who was in poor health at the Albemarle Hotel, and asked for writing materials to make out the note; but this was held back for a time. Because the idea was to punish him once for all, by some hours in solitary confinement. By ten o'clock the news of his arrest had got out and there was a lot of his friends gathered at the jail, such as Mr. Dana, Mr. Bond and General Arthur. But the jailer said he couldn't let any one see the prisoner. They looked up the sheriff and found him at a party which was being given at the house of Mr. Brown, on Fifth Avenue, to celebrate a Tammany victory. The sheriff excused himself for a minute, and getting out of sight, didn't come back. Bowles's friends went over to the sheriff's house, but they couldn't get anybody out of bed. So the prisoner had to spend the night behind the bars. Of course, in the morning his friends who had been up all night, such as Mr. Dunn, Cyrus W. Field, and the others, got the bail bond, and by eleven o'clock he was free. But he had gone through an experience which must have taught a lesson to the pen-and-ink fellows far and wide.

OLD MAN MINICK

A Short Story

BY EDNA FERBER

FROM "OLD MAN MINICK"

ALEXANDER WOOLCOTT called it "the inevitable and perfect story," this drama of old Minick who revolts against his son and his son's family to prove that an old man is after all a human being.

OLD MAN MINICK

His wife had always spoiled him outrageously. No doubt of that. Take, for example, the matter of the pillows merely. Old man Minick slept high. That is, he thought he slept high. He liked two plump pillows on his side of the great, wide, old-fashioned cherry bed. He would sink into them with a vast grunting and sighing and puffing expressive of nerves and muscles relaxed and gratified. But in the morning there was always one pillow on the floor. He had thrown it there. Always, in the morning, there it lay, its plump white cheek turned reproachfully up at him from the side of the bed. Ma Minick knew this, naturally, after forty years of the cherry bed. But she never begrudged him that extra pillow. Each morning, when she arose, she picked it up on her way to shut the window. Each morning the bed was made up with two pillows on his side of it, as usual.

Then there was the window. Ma Minick liked it open wide. Old man Minick, who rather prided himself on his modernism (he called it being up to date), was distrustful of the night air. In the folds of its sable mantle lurked a swarm of dread things—colds, clammy miasmas, fevers.

"Night air's just like any other air," Ma Minick would say, with some asperity. Ma Minick was no worm; and as modern as he. So when they went to bed the window would be open wide. They would lie there, the two old ones, talking comfortably about commonplace things. The kind of talk that goes on between a man and woman who have lived together in wholesome peace (spiced with occasional wholesome bickerings) for more than forty years.

"Remind me to see Gerson to-morrow about that lock on the basement door. The paper's full of burglars."

"If I think of it." She never failed to.

"George and Nettie haven't been over in a week now."

"Oh, well, young folks . . . Did you stop in and pay that Koritz the fifty cents for pressing your suit?"

"By golly, I forgot again! First thing in the morning."

A sniff. "Just smell the Yards." It was Chicago.

"Wind must be from the west."

Sleep came with reluctant feet, but they wooed her patiently. And presently she settled down between them and they slept lightly. Usually, some time during the night, he awoke, slid cautiously and with infinite stealth from beneath the covers, and closed the wide-flung window to within a bare two inches of the sill. Almost invariably she heard him; but she was a wise old

woman; a philosopher of parts. She knew better than to allow a window to shatter the peace of their marital felicity. As she lay there, smiling a little grimly in the dark and giving no sign of being awake, she thought, "Oh, well, I guess a closed window won't kill me either."

Still, sometimes, just to punish him a little, and to prove that she was nobody's fool, she would wait until he had dropped off to sleep again and then she, too, would achieve a stealthy trip to the window and would raise it slowly, carefully, inch by inch.

"How did that window come to be open?" he would say in the morning, being a poor dissembler.

"Window? Why, it's just the way it was when we went to bed." And she would stoop to pick up the pillow that lay on the floor.

There was little or no talk of death between this comfortable, active, sound-appearing man of almost seventy and this plump capable woman of sixty-six. But as always, between husband and wife, it was understood wordlessly (and without reason) that old man Minick would go first. Not that either of them had the slightest intention of going. In fact, when it happened they were planning to spend the winter in California and perhaps live there indefinitely if they liked it and didn't get too lonesome for George and Nettie, and the Chicago smoke, and Chicago noise, and Chicago smells and rush and dirt. Still, the solid sum paid yearly in insurance pre-

miums showed clearly that he meant to leave her in comfort and security. Besides, the world is full of widows. Every one sees that. But how many widowers? Few. Widows there are by the thousands; living alone; living in hotels; living with married daughters and sons-in-law or married sons and daughters-in-law. But of widowers in a like situation there are bewilderingly few. And why this should be no one knows.

So, then. The California trip never materialised. And the year that followed never was quite clear in old man Minick's dazed mind. In the first place, it was the year in which stocks tumbled and broke their backs. Gilt-edged securities showed themselves to be tinsel. Old man Minick had retired from active business just one year before, meaning to live comfortably on the fruit of a half-century's toil. He now saw that fruit rotting all about him.. There was in it hardly enough nourishment to sustain them. Then came the day when Ma Minick went downtown to see Matthews about that pain right here and came home looking shrivelled, talking shrilly about nothing, and evading Pa's eyes. Followed months that were just a jumble of agony, X-rays, hope, despair, morphia, nothingness.

After it was all over: "But I was going first," old man Minick said, dazedly.

The old house on Ellis near Thirty-ninth was sold for what it would bring. George, who knew Chicago real estate if any one did, said they might as well get what they could. Things would

only go lower. You'll see. And nobody's going to have any money for years. Besides, look at the neighbourhood!

Old man Minick said George was right. He said everybody was right. You would hardly have recognised in this shrunken figure and wattled face the spruce and dressy old man whom Ma Minick used to spoil so delightfully. "You know best, George. You know best." He who used to stand up to George until Ma Minick was moved to say, "Now, Pa, you don't know everything."

After Matthews' bills, and the hospital, and the nurses and the medicines and the thousand and one things were paid there was left exactly five hundred dollars a year.

"You're going to make your home with us, Father," George and Nettie said. Alma, too, said this would be the best. Alma, the married daughter, lived in Seattle. "Though you know Ferd and I would be only too glad to have you."

Seattle! The ends of the earth. Oh, no. No! he protested, every fibre of his old frame clinging to the accustomed. Seattle, at seventy! He turned piteous eyes on his son George and his daughter-in-law Nettie. "You're going to make your home with us, Father," they reassured him. He clung to them gratefully. After it was over Alma went home to her husband and their children.

So now he lived with George and Nettie in the five-room flat on South Park Avenue, just across

from Washington Park. And there was no extra pillow on the floor.

Nettie hadn't said he couldn't have the extra pillow. He had told her he used two and she had given him two the first week. But every morning she had found a pillow cast on the floor.

"I thought you used two pillows, Father."

"I do."

"But there's always one on the floor when I make the bed in the morning. You always throw one on the floor. You only sleep on one pillow, really."

"I use two pillows."

But the second week there was one pillow. He tossed and turned a good deal there in his bedroom off the kitchen. But he got used to it in time. Not used to it, exactly, but—well——

The bedroom off the kitchen wasn't as menial as it sounds. It was really rather cosy. The five-room flat held living room, front bedroom, dining room, kitchen, and maid's room. The room off the kitchen was intended as a maid's room but Nettie had no maid. George's business had suffered with the rest. George and Nettie had said, "I wish there was a front room for you, Father. You could have ours and we'd move back here, only this room's too small for twin beds and the dressing table and the chiffonier." They had meant it—or meant to mean it.

"This is fine," old man Minick had said. "This is good enough for anybody." There was

a narrow white enamel bed and a tiny dresser and a table. Nettie had made gay cretonne covers and spreads and put a little reading lamp on the table and arranged his things. Ma Minick's picture on the dresser with her mouth sort of pursed to make it look small. It wasn't a recent picture. Nettie and George had had it framed for him as a surprise. They had often urged her to have a picture taken, but she had dreaded it. Old man Minick didn't think much of that photograph, though he never said so. He needed no photograph of Ma Minick. He had a dozen of them; a gallery of them; thousands of them. Lying on his one pillow he could take them out and look at them one by one as they passed in review, smiling, serious, chiding, praising, there in the dark. He needed no picture on his dresser.

A handsome girl, Nettie, and a good girl. He thought of her as a girl, though she was well past thirty. George and Nettie had married late. This was only the third year of their marriage. Alma, the daughter, had married young, but George had stayed on, unwed, in the old house on Ellis until he was thirty-six and all Ma Minick's friends' daughters had had a try at him in vain. The old people had urged him to marry, but it had been wonderful to have him around the house, just the same. Somebody young around the house. Not that George had stayed around very much. But when he was there you knew he was there. He whistled while dressing.

He sang in the bath. He roared down the stairway, "Ma, where's my clean shirts?" The telephone rang for him. Ma Minick prepared special dishes for him. The servant girl said, "Oh, now, Mr. George, look what you've done! Gone and spilled the grease all over my clean kitchen floor!" and wiped it up adoringly while George laughed and gobbled his bit of food filched from pot or frying pan.

They had been a little surprised about Nettie. George was in the bond business and she worked for the same firm. A plump, handsome, eyeglassed woman with fine fresh colouring, a clear skin that old man Minick called appetising, and a great coil of smooth dark hair. She wore plain tailored things and understood the bond business in a way that might have led you to think her a masculine mind if she hadn't been so feminine, too, in her manner. Old man Minick had liked her better than Ma Minick had.

Nettie had called him Pop and joked with him and almost flirted with him in a daughterly sort of way. He liked to squeeze her plump arm and pinch her soft cheek between thumb and forefinger. She would laugh up at him and pat his shoulder and that shoulder would straighten spryly and he would waggle his head doggishly.

"Look out there, George!" the others in the room would say. "Your dad'll cut you out. First thing you know you'll lose your girl, that's all."

Nettie would smile. Her teeth were white

and strong and even. Old man Minick would laugh and wink, immensely pleased and flattered. "We understand each other, don't we, Pop?" Nettie would say.

During the first years of their married life Nettie stayed home. She fussed happily about her little flat, gave parties, went to parties, played bridge. She seemed to love the ease, the relaxation, the small luxuries. She and George were very much in love. Before her marriage she had lived in a boarding house on Michigan Avenue. At mention of it now she puckered up her face. She did not attempt to conceal her fondness for these five rooms of hers, so neat, so quiet, so bright, so cosy. Over-stuffed velvet in the living room, with silk lamp-shades, and small tables holding books and magazines and little boxes containing cigarettes or hard candies. Very modern. A gate-legged table in the dining room. Caramel-coloured walnut in the bedroom, rich and dark and smooth. She loved it. An orderly woman. Everything in its place. Before eleven o'clock the little apartment was shining, spotless; cushions plumped, crumbs brushed, vegetables in cold water. The telephone. "Hello! . . . Oh, hello, Bess! Oh, hours ago . . . Not a thing . . . Well, if George is willing . . . I'll call him up and ask him. We haven't seen a show in two weeks. I'll call you back within the next half hour. . . . No, I haven't done my marketing yet. . . . Yes, and have dinner downtown. Meet at seven."

Into this orderly smooth-running mechanism was catapulted a bewildered old man. She no longer called him Pop. He never dreamed of squeezing the plump arm or pinching the smooth cheek. She called him Father. Sometimes George's Father. Sometimes, when she was telephoning, there came to him—"George's father's living with us now, you know. I can't."

They were very kind to him, Nettie and George. "Now just you sit right down here, Father. What do you want to go poking off into your own room for?"

He remembered that in the last year Nettie had said something about going back to work. There wasn't enough to do around the house to keep her busy. She was sick of afternoon parties. Sew and eat, that's all, and gossip, or play bridge. Besides, look at the money. Business was awful. The two old people had resented this idea as much as George had—more, in fact. They were scandalised.

"Young folks nowadays!" shaking their heads. "Young folks nowadays. What are they thinking of! In my days when you got married you had babies."

George and Nettie had had no babies. At first Nettie had said, "I'm so happy. I just want a chance to rest. I've been working since I was seventeen. I just want to rest, first." One year. Two years. Three. And now Pa Minick.

Ma Minick, in the old house on Ellis Avenue, had kept a loose sort of larder; not lavish, but

plentiful. They both ate a great deal, as old people are likely to do. Old man Minick, especially, had liked to nibble. A handful of raisins from the box on the shelf. A couple of nuts from the dish on the sideboard. A bit of candy rolled beneath the tongue. At dinner (sometimes, toward the last, even at noon-time) a plate of steaming soup, hot, revivifying, stimulating. Plenty of this and plenty of that. "What's the matter, Jo? You're not eating." But he was, amply. Ma Minick had liked to see him eat too much. She was wrong, of course.

But at Nettie's things were different. Hers was a sufficient but stern ménage. So many mouths to feed; just so many lamb chops. Nettie knew about calories and vitamines and mysterious things like that, and talked about them. So many calories in this. So many calories in that. He never was quite clear in his mind about these things said to be lurking in his food. He had always thought of spinach as spinach, chops as chops. But to Nettie they were calories. They lunched together, these two. George was, of course, downtown. For herself Nettie would have one of those feminine pick-up lunches; a dab of apple sauce, a cup of tea, and a slice of cold toast left from breakfast. This she would eat while old man Minick guiltily supped up his cup of warmed-over broth, or his coddled egg. She always pressed upon him any bit of cold meat that was left from the night before, or any remnants of vegetable or spaghetti. Often there was

quite a little fleet of saucers and sauce plates grouped about his main plate. Into these he dipped and swooped uncomfortably, and yet with a relish. Sometimes, when he had finished, he would look about, furtively.

"What'll you have, Father? Can I get you something?"

"Nothing, Nettie, nothing. I'm doing fine." She had finished the last of her wooden toast and was waiting for him kindly.

Still, this balanced and scientific fare seemed to agree with him. As the winter went on he seemed actually to have regained most of his former hardiness and vigour. A handsome old boy he was, ruddy, hale, with the zest of a juicy old apple, slightly withered but still sappy. It should be mentioned that he had a dimple in his cheek which flashed unexpectedly when he smiled. It gave him a roguish—almost boyish—effect most appealing to the beholder. Especially the feminine beholder. Much of his spoiling at the hands of Ma Minick had doubtless been due to this mere depression of the skin.

Spring was to bring a new and welcome source of enrichment into his life. But these first six months of his residence with George and Nettie were hard. No spoiling there. He missed being made much of. He got kindness, but he needed love. Then, too, he was rather a gabby old man. He liked to hold forth. In the old house on Ellis there had been visiting back and forth between men and women of his own age,

and Ma's. At these gatherings he had waxed oratorical or argumentative, and they had heard him, some in agreement, some in disagreement, but always respectfully, whether he prated of real estate or social depravity; prohibition or European exchange.

"Let me tell you, here and now, something's got to be done before you can get a country back on a sound financial basis. Why, take Russia alone, why . . ." Or: "Young people nowadays! They don't know what respect means. I tell you there's got to be a change and there will be, and it's the older generation that's got to bring it about. What do they know of hardship! What do they know about work—real work. Most of 'em's never done a real day's work in their life. All they think of is dancing and gambling and drinking. Look at the way they dress! Look at . . ."

Ad lib.

"That's so," the others would agree. "I was saying only yesterday . . ."

Then, too, until a year or two before, he had taken active part in business. He had retired only at the urging of Ma and the children. They said he ought to rest and play and enjoy himself.

Now, as his strength and good spirits gradually returned he began to go downtown, mornings. He would dress, carefully, though a little shakily. He had always shaved himself and he kept this up. All in all, during the day, he occupied the

bathroom literally for hours, and this annoyed Nettie to the point of frenzy, though she said nothing. He liked the white cheerfulness of the little tiled room. He puddled about in the water endlessly. Snorted and splashed and puffed and snuffled and blew. He was one of those audible washers who emerge dripping and whose ablutions are distributed impartially over ceiling, walls, and floor.

Nettie, at the closed door: "Father, are you all right?"

Splash! Prrrf! "Yes. Sure. I'm all right."

"Well, I didn't know. You've been in there so long."

He was a neat old man, but there was likely to be a spot or so on his vest or his coat lapel, or his tie. Ma used to remove these, on or off him, as the occasion demanded, rubbing carefully and scolding a little, making a chiding sound between tongue and teeth indicative of great impatience of his carelessness. He had rather enjoyed these sounds, and this rubbing and scratching on the cloth with the fingernail and moistened rag. They indicated that some one cared. Cared about the way he looked. Had pride in him. Loved him. Nettie never removed spots. Though infrequently she said, "Father, just leave that suit out, will you? I'll send it to the cleaner's with George's. The man's coming to-morrow morning." He would look down at himself, hastily, and attack a spot here and there with a futile fingernail.

His morning toilette completed, he would make for the Fifty-first Street L. Seated in the train he would assume an air of importance and testy haste; glance out of the window; look at his watch. You got the impression of a handsome and well-preserved old gentleman on his way downtown to consummate a shrewd business deal. He had been familiar with Chicago's downtown for fifty years and he could remember when State Street was a tree-shaded cottage district. The noise and rush and clangour of the Loop had long been familiar to him. But now he seemed to find the downtown trip arduous, even hazardous. The roar of the elevated trains, the hoarse hoots of the motor horns, the clang of the street cars, the bedlam that is Chicago's downtown district bewildered him, frightened him almost. He would skip across the street like a harried hare, just missing a motor truck's nose and all unconscious of the stream of invective directed at him by its charioteer. "Heh! Whatcha! . . . Look!"— Sometimes a policeman came to his aid, or attempted to, but he resented his proffered help.

"Say, look here, my lad," he would say to the tall, tired, and not at all burly (standing on one's feet directing traffic at Wabash and Madison for eight hours a day does not make for burliness) policeman, "I've been coming downtown since long before you were born. You don't need to help me. I'm no jay from the country."

He visited the Stock Exchange. This de-

pressed him. Stocks were lower than ever and still going down. His five hundred a year was safe, but the rest seemed doomed for his lifetime, at least. He would drop in at George's office. George's office was pleasantly filled with dapper, neat young men and (surprisingly enough) dapper, slim young women, seated at desks in the big light-flooded room. At one corner of each desk stood a polished metal placard on a little standard and bearing the name of the desk's occupant. Mr. Owens. Mr. Satterlee. Mr. James. Miss Rauch. Mr. Minick.

"Hello, Father," Mr. Minick would say, looking annoyed. "What's bringing you down?"

"Oh, nothing. Nothing. Just had a little business to tend to over at the Exchange. Thought I'd drop in. How's business?"

"Rotten."

"I should think it was!" Old man Minick would agree. "I—should—think it—was! Hm."

George wished he wouldn't. He couldn't have it, that's all. Old man Minick would stroll over to the desk marked Satterlee, or Owens, or James. These brisk young men would toss an upward glance at him and concentrate again on the sheets and files before them. Old man Minick would stand, balancing from heel to toe and blowing out his breath a little. He looked a bit yellow and granulated and wavering, there in the cruel morning light of the big plate glass windows. Or perhaps it was the contrast he pre-

sented with these slim, slick young salesmen.

"Well, h'are you to-day, Mr.—uh—Satterlee? What's the good word?"

Mr. Satterlee would not glance up this time. "I'm pretty well. Can't complain."

"Good. Good."

"Anything I can do for you?"

"No-o-o. No. Not a thing. Just dropped in to see my son a minute."

"I see." Not unkindly. Then, as old man Minick still stood there, balancing, Mr. Satterlee would glance up again, frowning a little. "Your son's desk is over there, I believe. Yes."

George and Nettie had a bedtime conference about these visits and Nettie told him gently, that the bond house head objected to friends and relatives dropping in. It was against office rules. It had been so when she was employed there. Strictly business. She herself had gone there only once since her marriage.

Well, that was all right. Business was like that nowadays. Rush and grab and no time for anything.

The winter was a hard one, with a record snowfall and intense cold. He stayed indoors for days together. A woman of his own age in like position could have occupied herself usefully and happily. She could have hemmed a sash-curtain; knitted or crocheted; tidied a room; taken a hand in the cooking or preparing of food; ripped an old gown; made over a new one; indulged in an occasional afternoon festivity with

women of her own years. But for old man Minick there were no small tasks. There was nothing he could do to make his place in the household justifiable. He wasn't even particularly good at those small jobs of hammering, or painting, or general "fixing." Nettie could drive a nail more swiftly, more surely than he. "Now, Father, don't you bother. I'll do it. Just you go and sit down. Isn't it time for your afternoon nap?"

He waxed a little surly. "Nap! I just got up. I don't want to sleep my life away."

George and Nettie frequently had guests in the evening. They played bridge, or poker, or talked.

"Come in, Father," George would say. "Come in. You all know Dad, don't you, folks?" He would sit down, uncertainly. At first he had attempted to expound, as had been his wont in the old house on Ellis. "I want to say, here and now, that this country's got to . . ." But they went on, heedless of him. They interrupted or refused, politely, to listen. So he sat in the room, yet no part of it. The young people's talk swirled and eddied all about him. He was utterly lost in it. Now and then Nettie or George would turn to him and with raised voice (he was not at all deaf and prided himself on it) would shout, "It's about this or that, Father. He was saying . . ."

When the group roared with laughter at a sally from one of them he would smile uncertainly

but amiably, glancing from one to the other in complete ignorance of what had passed, but not resenting it. He took to sitting more and more in his kitchen bedroom, smoking a comforting pipe and reading and re-reading the evening paper. During that winter he and Canary, the negro washwoman, became quite good friends. She washed down in the basement once a week but came up to the kitchen for her massive lunch. A walrus-waisted black woman, with a rich throaty voice, a rolling eye, and a kindly heart. He actually waited for her appearance above the laundry stairs.

"Weh, how's Mist' Minick to-day! Ah nev' did see a gemun spry's you ah fo' yo' age. No, suh! Nev' did."

At this rare praise he would straighten his shoulders and waggle his head. "I'm worth any ten of these young sprats to-day." Canary would throw back her head in a loud and companionable guffaw.

Nettie would appear at the kitchen swinging door. "Canary's having her lunch, Father. Don't you want to come into the front room with me? We'll have our lunch in another half-hour."

He followed her obediently enough. Nettie thought of him as a troublesome and rather pathetic child—a child who would never grow up. If she attributed any thoughts to that fine old head they were ambling thoughts, bordering, perhaps, on senility. Little did she know how expertly this old one surveyed her and how

ruthlessly he passed judgment. She never suspected the thoughts that formed in the active brain.

He knew about women. He had married a woman. He had had children by her. He looked at this woman—his son's wife—moving about her little five-room flat. She had theories about children. He had heard her expound them. You didn't have them except under such and such circumstances. It wasn't fair otherwise. Plenty of money for their education. Well. He and his wife had had three children. Paul, the second, had died at thirteen. A blow, that had been. They had not always planned for the coming of the three but they always had found a way, afterward. You managed, somehow, once the little wrinkled red ball had fought its way into the world. You managed. You managed. Look at George! Yet when he was born, thirty-nine years ago, Pa and Ma Minick had been hard put to it.

Sitting there, while Nettie dismissed him as negligible, he saw her clearly, grimly. He looked at her. She was plump, but not too short, with a generous width between the hips; a broad full bosom, but firm; round arms and quick slim legs; a fine sturdy throat. The curve between arm and breast made a graceful, gracious line . . . Working in a bond office . . . Working in a bond office . . . There was nothing in the Bible about working in a bond office. Here was a woman built for child-bearing.

She thought him senile, negligible.

In March Nettie had in a sewing woman for a week. She had her two or three times a year. A hawk-faced woman of about forty-nine, with a blue-bottle figure and a rapacious eye. She sewed in the dining room and there was a pleasant hum of machine and snip of scissors and murmur of conversation and rustle of silky stuff; and hot savoury dishes for lunch. She and old man Minick became great friends. She even let him take out bastings. This when Nettie had gone out from two to four, between fittings.

He chuckled and waggled his head. "I expect to be paid regular assistant's wages for this," he said.

"I guess you don't need any wages, Mr. Minick," the woman said. "I guess you're pretty well fixed."

"Oh, well, I can't complain." (Five hundred a year.)

"Complain! I should say not! If I was to complain it'd be different. Work all day to keep myself; and nobody to come home to at night."

"Widow, ma'am?"

"Since I was twenty. Work, work, that's all I've had. And lonesome! I suppose you don't know what lonesome is."

"Oh, don't I!" slipped from him. He had dropped the bastings.

The sewing woman flashed a look at him from the cold hard eye. "Well, maybe you do. I suppose living here like this, with sons and

daughters, ain't so grand, for all your money. Now me, I've always managed to keep my own little place that I could call home, to come back to. It's only two rooms, and nothing to rave about, but it's home. Evenings I just cook and fuss around. Nobody to fuss for, but I fuss, anyway. Cooking, that's what I love to do. Plenty of good food, that's what folks need to keep their strength up." Nettie's lunch that day had been rather scant.

She was there a week. In Nettie's absence she talked against her. He protested, but weakly. Did she give him egg-noggs? Milk? Hot toddy? Soup? Plenty of good rich gravy and meat and puddings? Well! That's what folks needed when they weren't so young any more. Not that he looked old. My, no. Spryer than many young boys, and handsomer than his own son if she did say so.

He fed on it, hungrily. The third day she was flashing meaning glances at him across the luncheon table. The fourth she pressed his foot beneath the table. The fifth, during Nettie's afternoon absence, she got up, ostensibly to look for a bit of cloth which she needed for sewing, and, passing him, laid a caressing hand on his shoulder. Laid it there and pressed his shoulder ever so little. He looked up, startled. The glances across the luncheon had largely passed over his head; the foot beneath the table might have been an accident. But this—this was unmistakable. He stood up, a little shakily. She

caught his hand. The hawk-like face was close to his.

"You need somebody to love you," she said. "Somebody to do for you, and love you." The hawk face came nearer. He leaned a little toward it. But between it and his face was Ma Minick's face, plump, patient, quizzical, kindly. His head came back sharply. He threw the woman's hot hand from him.

"Woman!" he cried. "Jezebel!"

The front door slammed. Nettie. The woman flew to her sewing. Old man Minick, shaking, went into his kitchen bedroom.

"Well," said Nettie, depositing her bundles on the dining-room table, "did you finish that faggoting? Why, you haven't done so very much, have you!"

"I ain't feeling so good," said the woman. "That lunch didn't agree with me."

"Why, it was a good plain lunch. I don't see——"

"Oh, it was plain enough, all right."

Next day she did not come to finish her work. Sick, she telephoned. Nettie called it an outrage. She finished the sewing herself, though she hated sewing. Pa Minick said nothing, but there was a light in his eye. Now and then he chuckled, to Nettie's infinite annoyance, though she said nothing.

"Wanted to marry me!" he said to himself, chuckling. "Wanted to marry me! The old rip!"

At the end of April, Pa Minick discovered Washington Park, and the Club, and his whole life was from that day transformed.

He had taken advantage of the early spring sunshine to take a walk, at Nettie's suggestion.

"Why don't you go into the Park, Father? It's really warm out. And the sun's lovely. Do you good."

He had put on his heaviest shirt, and a muffler, and George's old red sweater with the great white "C" on its front, emblem of George's athletic prowess at the University of Chicago; and over all, his greatcoat. He had taken warm mittens and his cane with the greyhound's-head handle, carved. So equipped he had ambled uninterestedly over to the Park across the way. And there he had found new life.

New life in old life. For the Park was full of old men. Old men like himself, with greyhound's-head canes, and mufflers and somebody's sweater worn beneath their greatcoats. They wore arctics, though the weather was fine. The skin of their hands and cheek-bones was glazed and had a tight look though it lay in fine little folds. There were splotches of brown on the backs of their hands, and on the temples and forehead. Their heavy grey or brown socks made comfortable folds above their ankles. From that April morning until winter drew on the Park saw old man Minick daily. Not only daily but by the day. Except for his meals, and

a brief hour for his after-luncheon nap, he spent all his time there.

For in the Park old man Minick and all the old men gathered there found a Forum—a safety valve—a means of expression. It did not take him long to discover that the Park was divided into two distinct sets of old men. There were the old men who lived with their married sons and daughters-in-law or married daughters and sons-in-law. Then there were the old men who lived in the Grant Home for Aged Gentlemen. You saw its fine red-brick façade through the trees at the edge of the Park.

And the slogan of these first was:

"My son and my da'ter they wouldn't want me to live in any public Home. No, sirree! They want me right there with them. In their own home. That's the kind of son and daughter I've got!"

The slogan of the second was:

"I wouldn't live with any son or daughter. Independent. That's me. My own boss. Nobody to tell me what I can do and what I can't. Treat you like a child. I'm my own boss! Pay my own good money and get my keep for it."

The first group, strangely enough, was likely to be spotted of vest and a little frayed as to collar. You saw them going on errands for their daughters-in-law. A loaf of bread. Spool of white No. 100. They took their small grandchildren to the duck pond and between the two

toddlers hand in hand—the old and infirm and the infantile and infirm—it was hard to tell which led which.

The second group was shiny as to shoes, spotless as to linen, dapper as to clothes. They had no small errands. Theirs was a magnificent leisure. And theirs was magnificent conversation. The questions they discussed and settled there in the Park—these old men—were not international merely. They were cosmic in scope.

The War? Peace? Disarmament? China? Free love? Mere conversational bubbles to be tossed in the air and disposed of in a burst of foam. Strong meat for old man Minick who had so long been fed on pap. But he soon got used to it. Between four and five in the afternoon, in a spot known as Under The Willows, the meeting took the form of a club—an open forum. A certain group made up of Socialists, Free Thinkers, parlour anarchists, bolshevists, had for years drifted there for talk. Old man Minick learned high-sounding phrases. "The Masters . . . democracy . . . toil of the many for the good of the few . . . the ruling class . . . free speech . . . the People. . . ."

The strong-minded ones held forth. The weaker ones drifted about on the outskirts, sometimes clinging to the moist and sticky paw of a round-eyed grandchild. Earlier in the day—at eleven o'clock, say—the talk was not so general nor so inclusive. The old men were likely to

drift into groups of two or three or four. They sat on sun-bathed benches and their conversation was likely to be rather smutty at times, for all they looked so mild and patriarchal and desiccated. They paid scant heed to the white-haired old women who, like themselves, were sunning in the park. They watched the young women switch by, with appreciative glances at their trim figures and slim ankles. The day of the short skirt was a grand time for them. They chuckled among themselves and made wicked comment. One saw only white-haired, placid, tremulous old men, but their minds still worked with belated masculinity like naughty small boys talking behind the barn.

Old man Minick early achieved a certain leadership in the common talk. He had always liked to hold forth. This last year had been one of almost unendurable bottling up. At first he had timidly sought the less assertive ones of his kind. Mild old men who sat in rockers in the pavilion waiting for lunch time. Their conversation irritated him. They remarked everything that passed before their eyes.

"There's a boat. Fella with a boat."

A silence. Then, heavily: "Yeh."

Five minutes.

"Look at those people laying on the grass. Shouldn't think it was warm enough for that . . . Now they're getting up."

A group of equestrians passed along the bridle path on the opposite side of the lagoon. They

made a frieze against the delicate spring greenery. The coats of the women were scarlet, vivid green, arresting, stimulating.

"Riders."

"Yes."

"Good weather for riding."

A man was fishing near by. "Good weather for fishing."

"Yes."

"Wonder what time it is, anyway." From a pocket, deep-buried, came forth a great gold blob of a watch. "I've got one minute to eleven."

Old man Minick dragged forth a heavy globe. "Mm. I've got eleven."

"Little fast, I guess."

Old man Minick shook off this conversation impatiently. This wasn't conversation. This was oral death, though he did not put it thus. He joined the other men. They were discussing Spiritualism. He listened, ventured an opinion, was heard respectfully and then combated mercilessly. He rose to the verbal fight, and won it.

"Let's see," said one of the old men. "You're not living at the Grant Home, are you?"

"No," old man Minick made reply, proudly. "I live with my son and his wife. They wouldn't have it any other way."

"Hm. Like to be independent myself."

"Lonesome, ain't it? Over there?"

"Lonesome! Say, Mr.—what'd you say your name was? Minick? Mine's Hughes—I

never was lonesome in my life 'cept for six months when I lived with my daughter and her husband and their five children. Yes, sir. That's what I call lonesome, in an eight-room flat."

George and Nettie said, "It's doing you good, Father, being out in the air so much." His eyes were brighter, his figure straighter, his colour better. It was that day he had held forth so eloquently on the emigration question. He had to read a lot—papers and magazines and one thing and another—to keep up. He devoured all the books and pamphlets about bond issues and national finances brought home by George. In the Park he was considered an authority on bonds and banking. He and a retired real estate man named Mowry sometimes debated a single question for weeks. George and Nettie, relieved, thought he ambled to the Park and spent senile hours with his drooling old friends discussing nothing amiably and witlessly. This while he was eating strong meat, drinking strong drink.

Summer sped. Was past. Autumn held a new dread for old man Minick. When winter came where should he go? Where should he go? Not back to the five-room flat all day, and the little back bedroom, and nothingness. In his mind there rang a childish old song they used to sing at school. A silly song:

> Where do all the birdies go?
> *I* know. *I* know.

But he didn't know. He was terror-stricken. October came and went. With the first of November the Park became impossible, even at noon, and with two overcoats and the sweater. The first frost was a black frost for him. He scanned the heavens daily for rain or snow. There was a cigar store and billiard room on the corner across the boulevard and there he sometimes went, with a few of his Park cronies, to stand behind the players' chairs and watch them at pinochle or rum. But this was a dull business. Besides, the Grant men never came there. They had card rooms of their own.

He turned away from his smoky little den on a drab November day, sick at heart. The winter. He tried to face it, and at what he saw he shrank and was afraid.

He reached the apartment and went around to the rear, dutifully. His rubbers were wet and muddy and Nettie's living-room carpet was a fashionable grey. The back door was unlocked. It was Canary's day downstairs, he remembered. He took off his rubbers in the kitchen and passed into the dining room. Voices. Nettie had company. Some friends, probably, for tea. He turned to go to his room, but stopped at hearing his own name. Father Minick. Father Minick. Nettie's voice.

"Of course, if it weren't for Father Minick I would have. But how can we as long as he lives with us? There isn't room. And we can't af-

ford a bigger place now, with rents what they are. This way it wouldn't be fair to the child. We've talked it over, George and I. Don't you suppose? But not as long as Father Minick is with us. I don't mean we'd use the maid's room for a—for the—if we had a baby. But I'd have to have some one in to help, then, and we'd have to have that extra room."

He stood there in the dining room, quiet. Quiet. His body felt queerly remote and numb, but his mind was working frenziedly. Clearly, too, in spite of the frenzy. Death. That was the first thought. Death. It would be easy. But he didn't want to die. Strange, but he didn't want to die. He liked Life. The Park, the trees, the Club, the talk, the whole show. . . . Nettie was a good girl . . . The old must make way for the young. They had the right to be born . . . Maybe it was just another excuse. Almost four years married. Why not three years ago? . . . The right to live. The right to live. . . .

He turned, stealthily, stealthily, and went back into the kitchen, put on his rubbers, stole out into the darkening November afternoon.

In an hour he was back. He entered at the front door this time, ringing the bell. He had never had a key. As if he were a child they would not trust him with one. Nettie's women friends were just leaving. In the air you smelled a mingling of perfume, and tea, and cakes, and powder. He sniffed it, sensitively.

"How do you do, Mr. Minick!" they said. "How are you! Well, you certainly look it. And how do you manage these gloomy days?"

He smiled genially, taking off his greatcoat and revealing the red sweater with the big white "C" on it. "I manage. I manage." He puffed out his cheeks. "I'm busy moving."

"Moving!" Nettie's startled eyes flew to his, held them. "Moving, Father?"

"Old folks must make way for the young," he said, gaily. "That's the law of life. Yes, sir! New ones. New ones."

Nettie's face was scarlet. "Father, what in the world——"

"I signed over at the Grant Home to-day. Move in next week." The women looked at her, smiling. Old man Minick came over to her and patted her plump arm. Then he pinched her smooth cheek with a quizzical thumb and forefinger. Pinched it and shook it ever so little.

"I don't know what you mean," said Nettie, out of breath.

"Yes, you do," said old man Minick, and while his tone was light and jesting there was in his old face something stern, something menacing. "Yes, you do."

When he entered the Grant Home a group of them was seated about the fireplace in the main hall. A neat, ruddy, septuagenarian circle.

They greeted him casually, with delicacy of feeling, as if he were merely approaching them at their bench in the Park.

"Say, Minick, look here. Mowry here says China ought to have been included in the four-power treaty. He says——"

Old man Minick cleared his throat. "You take China, now," he said, "with her vast and practically, you might say, virgin country, why——"

An apple-cheeked maid in a black dress and a white apron stopped before him. He paused.

"Housekeeper says for me to tell you your room's all ready, if you'd like to look at it now."

"Minute. Minute, my child." He waved her aside with the air of one who pays five hundred a year for independence and freedom. The girl turned to go. "Uh—young lady! Young lady!" She looked at him. "Tell the housekeeper two pillows, please. Two pillows on my bed. Be sure."

"Yes, sir. Two pillows. Yes, sir. I'll be sure."

THE KING OF THE CATS

A Short Story

BY STEPHEN VINCENT BENÉT

FROM "O. HENRY MEMORIAL AWARD PRIZE STORIES OF 1929"

In this modern version of an old superstition, Mr. Benét writes of a bizarre Siamese princess who takes New York by storm and of a strange symphony conductor who has a tail and conducts with it. The O. Henry Memorial Award Committee selected this as one of its prize stories for last year. Mr. Benét is best known for his narrative poem of the Civil War, "John Brown's Body," which won the Pulitzer Prize for poetry in 1928.

BUT, my *dear*," said Mrs. Culverin, with a tiny gasp, "you can't actually mean—a *tail!*"

Mrs. Dingle nodded impressively. "Exactly. I've seen him. Twice. Paris, of course, and then, a command appearance at Rome—we were in the Royal box. He conducted—my dear, you've never heard such effects from an orchestra—and, my dear," she hesitated slightly, "he conducted *with it*."

"How perfectly, fascinatingly too horrid for words!" said Mrs. Culverin in a dazed but greedy voice. "We *must* have him to dinner as soon as he comes over—he is coming over, isn't he?"

"The twelfth," said Mrs. Dingle with a gleam in her eyes. "The New Symphony people have asked him to be guest conductor for three special concerts—I do hope you can dine with *us* some night while he's here—he'll be very busy, of course—but he's promised to give us what time he can spare."

"Oh, thank you, dear," said Mrs. Culverin abstractedly, her last raid upon Mrs. Dingle's pet British novelist still fresh in her mind. "You're always so delightfully hospitable—but you mustn't wear yourself out—the rest of us must do *our* part—I know Harry and myself would be only too glad to——"

"That's very sweet of you, darling." Mrs. Dingle also remembered the larceny of the British novelist. "But we're just going to give Monsieur Tibault—sweet name, isn't it! They say he's descended from the Tybalt in *Romeo and Juliet* and that's why he doesn't like Shakespeare—we're just going to give Monsieur Tibault the simplest sort of time—a little reception after his first concert, perhaps. He hates," she looked around the table, "large, mixed parties. And then, of course, his—er—little idiosyncrasy." She coughed delicately. "It makes him feel a trifle shy with strangers."

"But I don't understand yet, Aunt Emily," said Tommy Brooks, Mrs. Dingle's nephew. "Do you really mean this

Tibault bozo has a tail? Like a monkey and everything?"

"Tommy dear," said Mrs. Culverin crushingly, "in the first place Monsieur Tibault is not a bozo—he is a very distinguished musician—the finest conductor in Europe. And in the second place——"

"He has." Mrs. Dingle was firm. "He has a tail. He conducts with it."

"Oh, but honestly!" said Tommy, his ears pinkening. "I mean—of course, if you say so, Aunt Emily, I'm sure he has—but still, it sounds pretty steep, if you know what I mean! How about it, Professor Tatto?"

Professor Tatto cleared his throat. "Tck," he said, putting his finger tips together cautiously. "I shall be very anxious to see this Monsieur Tibault. For myself, I have never observed a genuine specimen of *homo caudatus*, so I should be inclined to doubt, and yet. . . In the Middle Ages, for instance, the belief in men—er—tailed or with caudal appendages of some sort, was both widespread and, as far as we can gather, well founded. As late as the Eighteenth Century, a Dutch sea captain with some character for veracity recounts the discovery of a pair of such creatures in the island of Formosa. They were in a low state of civilization, I believe, but the appendages in question were quite distinct. And in 1860 Dr. Grimbrook, the English surgeon, claims to have treated no less than three African natives with short but evident tails—though his testimony rests upon his unsupported word. After all, the thing is not impossible, though doubtless unusual. Web feet—rudimentary gills—these occur with some frequency. The appendix we have with us always. The chain of our descent from the apelike form is by no means complete. For that matter," he beamed around the table, "what can we call the last few vertebræ of the normal spine but the beginnings of a concealed and rudimentary tail? Oh, yes—yes—it's possible—quite—that in an extraordinary case—a reversion to type—a—survival—though, of course——"

"I told you so," said Mrs. Dingle triumphantly. "*Isn't* it fascinating? Isn't it, Princess?"

The Princess Vivrakanarda's eyes, blue as a field of larkspur, fathomless as the center of heaven, rested lightly for a moment on Mrs. Dingle's excited countenance.

"Ve-ry fascinating," she said, in a voice like stroked, golden

velvet. "I should like—I should like ve-ry much to meet this Monsieur Tibault."

"Well, *I* hope he breaks his neck!" said Tommy Brooks under his breath—but nobody ever paid much attention to Tommy.

Nevertheless, as the time for Monsieur Tibault's arrival in these States drew nearer and nearer, people in general began to wonder whether the Princess had spoken quite truthfully—for there was no doubt of the fact that, up till then, she had been the unique sensation of the season—and you know what social lions and lionesses are.

It was, if you remember, a Siamese season, and genuine Siamese were at quite as much of a premium as Russian accents had been in the quaint old days when the Chauve-Souris was a novelty. The Siamese Art Theatre, imported at terrific expense, was playing to packed houses at the Century Theatre. *Gushuptzgu*, an epic novel of Siamese farm life, in nineteen closely printed volumes, had just been awarded the Nobel Prize. Prominent pet-and-newt dealers reported no cessation in the appalling demand for Siamese cats. And upon the crest of this wave of interest in things Siamese the Princess Vivrakanarda poised with the elegant nonchalance of a Hawaiian water baby upon his surfboard. She was indispensable. She was incomparable. She was everywhere.

Youthful, enormously wealthy, allied on one hand to the Royal Family of Siam and on the other to the Cabots (and yet with the first eighteen of her twenty-one years shrouded from speculation in a golden zone of mystery), the mingling of races in her had produced an exotic beauty as distinguished as it was strange. She moved with a feline, effortless grace, and her skin was as if it had been gently powdered with tiny grains of the purest gold—yet the blueness of her eyes, set just a trifle slantingly, was as pure and startling as the sea on the rocks of Maine. Her brown hair fell to her knees—she had been offered extraordinary sums by the Master Barbers' Protective Association to have it shingled. Straight as a waterfall tumbling over brown rocks, it had a vague perfume of sandalwood and suave spices and held tints of rust and the sun. She did not talk very much—but then she did not have to—her voice had an odd, small, melodious huskiness that haunted the mind. She lived alone and was reputed to be very

lazy—at least it was known that she slept during most of the day—but at night she bloomed like a moonflower, and a depth came into her eyes.

It was no wonder that Tommy Brooks fell in love with her. The wonder was that she let him. There was nothing exotic or distinguished about Tommy—he was just one of those pleasant, normal young men who seem created to carry on the bond business by reading the newspapers in the University Club during most of the day, and can always be relied upon at night to fill an unexpected hole in a dinner party. It is true that the Princess could hardly be said to do more than tolerate any of her suitors—no one had ever seen those aloofly arrogant eyes enliven at the entrance of any male. But she seemed to be able to tolerate Tommy a little more than the rest—and that young man's infatuated daydreams were beginning to be beset by smart solitaires and imaginary apartments on Park Avenue when the famous Monsieur Tibault conducted his first concert at Carnegie Hall.

Tommy Brooks sat beside the Princess. The eyes he turned upon her were eyes of longing and love, but her face was as impassive as a Benda mask, and the only remark she made during the preliminary bustlings was that there seemed to be a number of people in the audience. But Tommy was relieved, if anything, to find her even a little more aloof than usual, for, ever since Mrs. Culverin's dinner party, a vague disquiet as to the possible impression which this Tibault creature might make upon her had been growing in his mind. It shows his devotion that he was present at all. To a man whose simple Princetonian nature found in "Just a Little Love, a Little Kiss," the quintessence of musical art, the average symphony was a positive torture, and he looked forward to the evening's program itself with a grim, brave smile.

"Ssh!" said Mrs. Dingle breathlessly. "He's coming!" It seemed to the startled Tommy as if he were suddenly back in the trenches under a heavy barrage, as Monsieur Tibault made his entrance to a perfect bombardment of applause.

Then the enthusiastic noise was sliced off in the middle, and a gasp took its place—a vast, windy sigh, as if every person in that multitude had suddenly said "Ah!" For the papers had not lied about him. The tail was there.

They called him theatric—but how well he understood the

uses of theatricalism! Dressed in unrelieved black from head to foot (the black dress shirt had been a special token of Mussolini's esteem), he did not walk on, he strolled, leisurely, easily, aloofly, the famous tail curled nonchalantly about one wrist—a suave, black panther lounging through a summer garden with that little mysterious weave of the head that panthers have when they pad behind bars—the glittering darkness of his eyes unmoved by any surprise or elation. He nodded, twice, in regal acknowledgment, as the clapping reached an apogee of frenzy. To Tommy there was something dreadfully reminiscent of the Princess in the way he nodded. Then he turned to his orchestra.

A second and louder gasp went up from the audience at this point, for, as he turned, the tip of that incredible tail twined with dainty carelessness into some hidden pocket and produced a black baton. But Tommy did not even notice. He was looking at the Princess instead.

She had not even bothered to clap, at first, but now . . . He had never seen her moved like this, never. She was not applauding, her hands were clenched in her lap, but her whole body was rigid, rigid as a steel bar, and the blue flowers of her eyes were bent upon the figure of Monsieur Tibault in a terrible concentration. The pose of her entire figure was so still and intense that for an instant Tommy had the lunatic idea that any moment she might leap from her seat beside him as lightly as a moth, and land, with no sound, at Monsieur Tibault's side to—yes—to rub her proud head against his coat in worship. Even Mrs. Dingle would notice in a moment.

"Princess—" he said, in a horrified whisper, "Princess——"

Slowly the tenseness of her body relaxed, her eyes veiled again, she grew calm.

"Yes, Tommy?" she said, in her usual voice, but there was still something about her . . .

"Nothing, only—oh, hang—he's starting!" said Tommy, as Monsieur Tibault, his hands loosely clasped before him, turned and *faced* the audience. His eyes dropped, his tail switched once impressively, then gave three little preliminary taps with his baton on the floor.

Seldom has Gluck's overture to *Iphigenie in Aulis* received such an ovation. But it was not until the Eighth Symphony

that the hysteria of the audience reached its climax. Never before had the New Symphony been played so superbly—and certainly never before had it been led with such genius. Three prominent conductors in the audience were sobbing with the despairing admiration of envious children toward the close, and one at least was heard to offer wildly ten thousand dollars to a well-known facial surgeon there present for a shred of evidence that tails of some variety could by any stretch of science be grafted upon a normally decaudate form. There was no doubt about it—no mortal hand and arm, be they ever so dexterous, could combine the delicate élan and powerful grace displayed in every gesture of Monsieur Tibault's tail.

A sable staff, it dominated the brasses like a flicker of black lightning; an ebon, elusive whip, it drew the last exquisite breath of melody from the wood winds and ruled the stormy strings like a magician's rod. Monsieur Tibault bowed and bowed again—roar after roar of frenzied admiration shook the hall to its foundations—and when he finally staggered, exhausted, from the platform, the president of the Wednesday Sonata Club was only restrained by force from flinging her ninety-thousand-dollar string of pearls after him in an excess of esthetic appreciation. New York had come and seen—and New York was conquered. Mrs. Dingle was immediately besieged by reporters, and Tommy Brooks looked forward to the "little party" at which he was to meet the new hero of the hour with feelings only a little less lugubrious than those that would have come to him just before taking his seat in the electric chair.

The meeting between his princess and Monsieur Tibault was worse and better than he expected. Better because, after all, they did not say much to each other—and worse because it seemed to him, somehow, that some curious kinship of mind between them made words unnecessary. They were certainly the most distinguished-looking couple in the room, as he bent over her hand. "So darlingly foreign, both of them, and yet so different," babbled Mrs. Dingle—but Tommy couldn't agree.

They were different, yes—the dark, lithe stranger with that bizarre appendage tucked carelessly in his pocket, and

the blue-eyed, brown-haired girl. But that difference only accentuated what they had in common—something in the way they moved, in the suavity of their gestures, in the set of their eyes. Something deeper, even, than race. He tried to puzzle it out—then, looking around at the others, he had a flash of revelation. It was as if that couple were foreign, indeed—not only to New York but to all common humanity. As if they were polite guests from a different star.

Tommy did not have a very happy evening, on the whole. But his mind worked slowly, and it was not until much later that the mad suspicion came upon him in full force.

Perhaps he is not to be blamed for his lack of immediate comprehension. The next few weeks were weeks of bewildered misery for him. It was not that the Princess's attitude toward him had changed—she was just as tolerant of him as before, but Monsieur Tibault was always there. He had a faculty of appearing as out of thin air—he walked, for all his height, as lightly as a butterfly—and Tommy grew to hate that faintest shuffle on the carpet that announced his presence as he had never hated the pound of the guns.

And then, hang it all, the man was so smooth, so infernally, unruffably smooth! He was never out of temper, never embarrassed. He treated Tommy with the extreme of urbanity, and yet his eyes mocked, deep down, and Tommy could do nothing. And, gradually, the Princess became more and more drawn to this stranger, in a soundless communion that found little need for speech—and that, too, Tommy saw and hated, and that, too, he could not mend.

He began to be haunted not only by Monsieur Tibault in the flesh but by Monsieur Tibault in the spirit. He slept badly, and when he slept he dreamed—of Monsieur Tibault, a man no longer, but a shadow, a specter, the limber ghost of an animal whose words came purringly between sharp little pointed teeth. There was certainly something odd about the whole shape of the fellow—his fluid ease, the mold of his head, even the cut of his finger nails—but just what it was escaped Tommy's intensest cogitation. And when he did put his finger on it at length, at first he refused to believe.

A pair of petty incidents decided him, finally, against all reason. He had gone to Mrs. Dingle's, one winter afternoon, hoping to find the Princess. She was out with his aunt, but

was expected back for tea, and he wandered idly into the library to wait. He was just about to switch on the lights, for the library was always dark even in summer, when he heard a sound of light breathing that seemed to come from the leather couch in the corner. He approached it cautiously and dimly made out the form of Monsieur Tibault, curled up on the couch, peacefully asleep.

The sight annoyed Tommy so that he swore under his breath and was back near the door on his way out, when the feeling we all know and hate, the feeling that eyes we cannot see are watching us, arrested him. He turned back—Monsieur Tibault had not moved a muscle of his body to all appearance—but his eyes were open now. And those eyes were black and human no longer. They were green—Tommy could have sworn it—and he could have sworn that they had no bottom and gleamed like little emeralds in the dark. It only lasted a moment, for Tommy pressed the light-button automatically—and there was Monsieur Tibault, his normal self, yawning a little but urbanely apologetic, but it gave Tommy time to think. Nor did what happened a trifle later increase his peace of mind.

They had lit a fire and were talking in front of it—by now, Tommy hated Monsieur Tibault so thoroughly that he felt that odd yearning for his company that often occurs in such cases. Monsieur Tibault was telling some anecdote, and Tommy was hating him worse than ever for basking with such obvious enjoyment in the heat of the flames and the ripple of his own voice.

Then they heard the street door open, and Monsieur Tibault jumped up—and, jumping, caught one sock on a sharp corner of the brass fire rail and tore it open in a jagged flap. Tommy looked down mechanically at the tear—a second's glance, but enough—for Monsieur Tibault, for the first time in Tommy's experience, lost his temper completely. He swore violently in some spitting, foreign tongue—his face distorted suddenly—he clapped his hand over his sock. Then, glaring furiously at Tommy, he fairly sprang from the room, and Tommy could hear him scaling the stairs in long, agile bounds. Tommy sank into a chair, careless for once of the fact that he heard the Princess's light laugh in the hall. He didn't want to see the Princess. He didn't want to see anybody. There had

been something revealed when Monsieur Tibault had torn that hole in his sock—and it was not the skin of a man. Tommy had caught a glimpse of—black plush. Black velvet. And then had come Monsieur Tibault's sudden explosion of fury. Good *Lord*—did the man wear black velvet stockings under his ordinary socks? Or could he—could he—but here Tommy held his fevered head in his hands.

He went to Professor Tatto that evening with a series of hypothetical questions, but as he did not dare confide his real suspicions to the Professor, the hypothetical answers he received served only to confuse him the more. Then he thought of Billy Strang. Billy was a good sort, and his mind had a turn for the bizarre. Billy might be able to help.

He couldn't get hold of Billy for three days, and lived through the interval in a fever of impatience. But finally they had dinner together at Billy's apartment, where his queer books were, and Tommy was able to blurt out the whole disordered jumble of his suspicions.

Billy listened without interrupting until Tommy was quite through. Then he pulled at his pipe. "But, my dear *man*——" he said protestingly.

"Oh, I know—I know," said Tommy, and waved his hands, "I know I'm crazy—you needn't tell me that—but I tell you, the man's a cat all the same—no, I don't see how he could be, but he is—why, hang it, in the first place, everybody knows he's got a *tail!*"

"Even so," said Billy, puffing. "Oh, my dear Tommy, I don't doubt you saw, or think you saw, everything you say. But, even so . . ." He shook his head.

"But what about those other birds, werwolves and things?" said Tommy.

Billy looked dubious. "We-ll," he admitted, "you've got me there, of course. At least—a tailed man *is* possible. And the yarns about werwolves go back far enough so that—well, *I* wouldn't say there aren't or haven't been werwolves—but then I'm willing to believe more things than most people. But a wer-cat—or a man that's a cat and a cat that's a man—honestly, Tommy——"

"If I don't get some real advice I'll go clean off my hinge. For heaven's sake, tell me something to *do!*"

"Lemme think," said Billy. "First, you're pizen-sure this man is——"

"A cat. Yeah," and Tommy nodded violently.

"Check. And second—if it doesn't hurt your feelings, Tommy—you're afraid this girl you're in love with has—er—at least a streak of—felinity—in her—and so she's drawn to him?"

"Oh, Lord, Billy, if I only knew!"

"Well—er—suppose she really is, too, you know—would you still be keen on her?"

"I'd marry her if she turned into a dragon every Wednesday!" said Tommy fervently.

Billy smiled. "H'm," he said, "then the obvious thing to do is to get rid of this Monsieur Tibault. Lemme think."

He thought about two pipes full, while Tommy sat on pins and needles. Then, finally, he burst out laughing.

"What's so darn funny?" said Tommy aggrievedly.

"Nothing, Tommy, only I've just thought of a stunt—something so blooming crazy—but if he is—h'm—what you think he is—it *might* work——" And, going to the bookcase, he took down a book.

"If you think you're going to quiet my nerves by reading me a bedtime story——"

"Shut up, Tommy, and listen to this—if you really want to get rid of your feline friend."

"What is it?"

"Book of Agnes Repplier's. About cats. Listen.

"'There is also a Scandinavian version of the ever famous story which Sir Walter Scott told to Washington Irving, which Monk Lewis told to Shelley and which, in one form or another, we find embodied in the folklore of every land'—now, Tommy, pay attention—'the story of the traveler who saw within a ruined abbey, a procession of cats, lowering into a grave a little coffin with a crown upon it. Filled with horror, he hastened from the spot; but when he had reached his destination he could not forbear relating to a friend the wonder he had seen. Scarcely had the tale been told when his friend's cat, who lay curled up tranquilly by the fire, sprang to its feet, cried out, "Then I am the King of the Cats!" and disappeared in a flash up the chimney.'

"Well?" said Billy, shutting the book.

"By gum!" said Tommy, staring. "By gum! Do you think there's a chance?"

"*I* think we're both in the booby-hatch. But if you want to try it——"

"Try it! I'll spring it on him the next time I see him. But—listen—I can't make it a ruined abbey——"

"Oh, use your imagination! Make it Central Park—anywhere. Tell it as if it happened to you—seeing the funeral procession and all that. You can lead into it somehow—let's see—some general line—oh, yes—'Strange, isn't it, how fact so often copies fiction. Why, only yesterday——' See?"

"Strange, isn't it, how fact so often copies fiction," repeated Tommy dutifully. "Why, only yesterday——"

"I happened to be strolling through Central Park when I saw something very odd."

"I happened to be strolling through—here, gimme that book!" said Tommy, "I want to learn the rest of it by heart!"

Mrs. Dingle's farewell dinner to the famous Monsieur Tibault, on the occasion of his departure for his Western tour, was looked forward to with the greatest expectations. Not only could everybody be there, including the Princess Vivrakanarda, but Mrs. Dingle, a hinter if there ever was one, had let it be known that at this dinner an announcement of very unusual interest to Society might be made. So everyone, for once, was almost on time, except for Tommy. He was at least fifteen minutes early, for he wanted to have speech with his aunt alone. Unfortunately, however, he had hardly taken off his overcoat when she was whispering some news in his ear so rapidly that he found it difficult to understand a word of it.

"And you mustn't breathe it to a soul!" she ended, beaming. "That is, not before the announcement—I think we'll have *that* with the salad—people never pay very much attention to salad——"

"Breathe what, Aunt Emily?" said Tommy, confused.

"The Princess, darling—the dear Princess and Monsieur Tibault—they just got engaged this afternoon, dear things! Isn't it *fascinating?*"

"Yeah," said Tommy, and started to walk blindly through the nearest door. His aunt restrained him.

"Not there, dear—not in the library. You can congratulate them later. They're just having a sweet little moment alone there now." And she turned away to harry the butler, leaving Tommy stunned.

But his chin came up after a moment. He wasn't beaten yet.

"Strange, isn't it, how often fact copies fiction?" he repeated to himself in dull mnemonics, and, as he did so, he shook his fist at the library door.

Mrs. Dingle was wrong, as usual. The Princess and Monsieur Tibault were not in the library—they were in the conservatory, as Tommy discovered when he wandered aimlessly past the glass doors.

He didn't mean to look, and after a second he turned away. But that second was enough.

Tibault was seated in a chair and she was crouched on a stool at his side, while his hand, softly, smoothly, stroked her brown hair. Black cat and Siamese kitten. Her face was hidden from Tommy, but he could see Tibault's face. And he could hear.

They were not talking, but there was a sound between them. A warm and contented sound like the murmur of giant bees in a hollow tree—a golden, musical rumble, deep-throated, that came from Tibault's lips and was answered by hers—a golden purr.

Tommy found himself back in the drawing room, shaking hands with Mrs. Culverin, who said frankly that she had seldom seen him look so pale.

The first two courses of the dinner passed Tommy like dreams, but Mrs. Dingle's cellar was notable, and by the middle of the meat course he began to come to himself. He had only one resolve now.

For the next few moments he tried desperately to break into the conversation, but Mrs. Dingle was talking, and even Gabriel will have a time interrupting Mrs. Dingle. At last, though, she paused for breath, and Tommy saw his chance.

"Speaking of that," said Tommy piercingly, without knowing in the least what he was referring to, "speaking of that——"

"As I was saying," said Professor Tatto. But Tommy

would not yield. The plates were being taken away. It was time for salad.

"Speaking of that," he said again, so loudly and strangely that Mrs. Culverin jumped, and an awkward hush fell over the table. "Strange, isn't it, how often fact copies fiction?" There, he was started. His voice rose even higher. "Why, only to-day I was strolling through——" and, word for word, he repeated his lesson. He could see Tibault's eyes glowing at him as he described the funeral. He could see the Princess, tense.

He could not have said what he had expected might happen when he came to the end. But it was not bored silence, everywhere, to be followed by Mrs. Dingle's acrid, "Well, Tommy, is that *quite* all?"

He slumped back in his chair, sick at heart. He was a fool, and his last resource had failed. Dimly he heard his aunt's voice saying, "Well, then——" and realized that she was about to make the fatal announcement.

But just then Monsieur Tibault spoke.

"One moment, Mrs. Dingle," he said, with extreme politeness, and she was silent. He turned to Tommy.

"You are—positive, I suppose, of what you saw this afternoon, Brooks?" he said, in tones of light mockery.

"Absolutely," said Tommy sullenly. "Do you think I'd——"

"Oh, no, no, no," Monsieur Tibault waved the implication aside, "but—such an interesting story—one likes to be sure of the details—and, of course, you *are* sure—*quite* sure—that the kind of crown you describe was on the coffin?"

"Of course," said Tommy, wondering, "but——"

"Then I'm the King of the Cats!" cried Monsieur Tibault in a voice of thunder, and, even as he cried it, the house lights blinked—there was the soft thud of an explosion that seemed muffled in cotton wool from the minstrel gallery—and the scene was lit for a second by an obliterating and painful burst of light that vanished in an instant and was succeeded by heavy, blinding clouds of white, pungent smoke.

"Oh, those *horrid* photographers," came Mrs. Dingle's voice in a melodious wail. "I *told* them not to take the flashlight picture till dinner was over, and now they've taken it *just* as I was nibbling lettuce!"

Someone tittered a little nervously. Someone coughed. Then, gradually, the veils of smoke dislimned and the green and black spots in front of Tommy's eyes died away.

They were blinking at each other like people who have just come out of a cave into brilliant sun. Even yet their eyes stung with the fierceness of that abrupt illumination, and Tommy found it hard to make out the faces across the table from him.

Mrs. Dingle took command of the half-blinded company with her accustomed poise. She rose, glass in hand. "And now, dear friends," she said in a clear voice, "I'm sure all of us are very happy to——" Then she stopped, open-mouthed, an expression of incredulous horror on her features. The lifted glass began to spill its contents on the tablecloth in a little stream of amber. As she spoke she had turned directly to Monsieur Tibault's place at the table—and Monsieur Tibault was no longer there.

Some say there was a bursting flash of fire that disappeared up the chimney—some say it was a giant cat that leaped through the window at a bound, without breaking the glass. Professor Tatto puts it down to a mysterious chemical disturbance operating only over Monsieur Tibault's chair. The butler, who is pious, believes the devil in person flew away with him, and Mrs. Dingle hesitates between witchcraft and a malicious ectoplasm dematerializing on the wrong cosmic plane. But be that as it may, one thing is certain—in the instant of fictive darkness which followed the glare of the flashlight, Monsieur Tibault, the great conductor, disappeared forever from mortal sight, tail and all.

Mrs. Culverin swears he was an international burglar and that she was just about to unmask him, when he slipped away under cover of the flashlight smoke, but no one else who sat at that historic dinner table believes her. No, there are no sound explanations, but Tommy thinks he knows, and he will never be able to pass a cat again without wondering.

Mrs. Tommy is quite of her husband's mind regarding cats —she was Gretchen Woolwine, of Chicago (*you* know the Woolwines!)—for Tommy told her his whole story, and, while she doesn't believe a great deal of it, there is no doubt in her heart that one person concerned in the affair was a *perfect* cat. Doubtless it would have been more romantic to relate how

Tommy's daring finally won him his princess—but, unfortunately, it would not be veracious. For the Princess Vivrakanarda, also, is with us no longer. Her nerves, shattered by the spectacular dénouement of Mrs. Dingle's dinner, required a sea voyage, and from that voyage she has never returned to America.

Of course, there are the usual stories—one hears of her, a nun in a Siamese convent, or a masked dancer at Le Jardin de ma Sœur—one hears that she has been murdered in Patagonia or married in Trebizon—but, as far as can be ascertained, not one of these gaudy fables has the slightest basis in fact. I believe that Tommy, in his heart of hearts, is quite convinced that the sea voyage was only a pretext, and that by some unheard-of means she has managed to rejoin the formidable Monsieur Tibault, wherever in the world of the visible or the invisible he may be—in fact, that in some ruined city or subterranean palace they reign together now, King and Queen of all the mysterious Kingdom of Cats. But that, of course, is quite impossible.

CONTACT

A Short Story

BY FRANCES NOYES HART

FROM "CONTACT AND OTHER STORIES"

For a decade this, Frances Noyes Hart's first story, has remained one of the unforgettable pieces of war fiction. It was an O. Henry Memorial Award prize winner in 1920.

"CONTACT!"

THE first time she heard it was in the silk-hung and flower-scented peace of the little drawing room in Curzon Street. His sister Rosemary had wanted to come up to London to get some clothes—Victory clothes they called them in those first joyous months after the armistice, and decked their bodies in scarlet and silver, even when their poor hearts went in black—and Janet had been urged to leave her own drab boarding-house room to stay with the forlorn small butterfly. They had struggled through dinner somehow, and Janet had finished her coffee and turned the great chair so that she could watch the dancing fire (it was cool for May), her cloudy brown head tilted back against the rose-red cushion, shadowy eyes half closed, idle hands linked across her knees. She looked every one of her thirty years—and mortally tired—and careless of both facts. But she man-

aged an encouraging smile at the sound of Rosemary's shy, friendly voice at her elbow.

"Janet, these are yours, aren't they? Mummy found them with some things last week, and I thought that you might like to have them."

She drew a quick breath at the sight of the shabby packet.

"Why, yes," she said evenly. "That's good of you, Rosemary. Thanks a lot."

"That's all right," murmured Rosemary diffidently. "Wouldn't you like something to read? There's a most frightfully exciting Western novel——"

The smile took on a slightly ironical edge.

"Don't bother about me, my dear. You see, I come from that frightfully exciting West, and I know all about the pet rattlesnakes and the wildly Bohemian cowboys. Run along and play with your book; I'll be off to bed in a few minutes."

Rosemary retired obediently to the deep chair in the corner, and with the smile gone but the irony still hovering, she slipped the cord off the packet. A meagre and sorry enough array; words had never been for her the swift, docile servitors that most people found them. But the thin gray sheet in her fingers started out gallantly enough—"Beloved." Beloved! She leaned far forward, dropping it with deft precision into the glowing pocket

of embers. What next? This was more like; it began: "Dear Captain Langdon" in the small, contained writing that was her pride, and it went on soberly enough, "I shall be glad to have tea with you next Friday—not Thursday, because I must be at the hut then. It was stupid of me to have forgotten you; next time I will try to do better." Well, she had done better the next time. She had not forgotten him again—never, never again. That had been her first letter; how absurd of Jerry, the magnificently careless, to have treasured it all that time, the miserable, stilted little thing! She touched it with curious fingers. Surely, surely he must have cared, to have cared so much for that!

It seemed incredible that she hadn't remembered him at once when he came into the hut that second time. Of course she had only seen him for a moment and six months had passed, but he was so absurdly vivid, every inch of him, from the top of his shining, dark head to the heels of his shining, dark boots—and there were a great many inches! How could she have forgotten, even for a minute, those eyes dancing like blue fire in the brown young face, the swift, disarming charm of his smile, and, above all, his voice—how, in the name of absurdity, could any one who had once heard it ever forget Jeremy Langdon's voice? Even now she

had only to close her eyes, and it rang out again, with its clipped British accent and its caressing magic, as un-English as any Provençal troubadour's! And yet she had forgotten; he had had to speak twice before she had even lifted her head.

"Miss America—oh, I say, she's forgotten me, and I thought that I'd made such an everlasting impression!" The delighted amazement reached even her tired ears, and she had smiled wanly as she pushed the pile of coppers nearer to him.

"Have you been in before? It's stupid of me, but there are such hundreds of thousands of you, and you are gone in a minute, you see. That's your change, I think."

"Hundreds of thousands of me, hey?" He had leaned across the counter, his face alight with mirth. "I wish to the Lord my angel mother could hear you—it's what I'm for ever tellin' her, though just between us, it's stuff and nonsense. I've got a well-founded suspicion that I'm absolutely unique. You wait and see!"

And she had waited—and she had seen! She stirred a little, dropped the note into the flames, and turned to the next, the quiet, mocking mouth suddenly tortured and rebellious.

"No, you must be mad," it ran, the trim writing strangely shaken. "How often have you seen me

—five times? Do you know how old I am? How hard and tired and useless? No—no, a thousand times. In a little while we will wake up and find that we were dreaming."

That had brought him to her swifter than Fate, triumphant mischief in every line of his exultant face. "Just let those damn cups slip from your palsied fingers, will you? I'm goin' to take your honourable age for a little country air—it may keep you out of the grave for a few days longer. Never can tell! No use your scowlin' like that. The car's outside, and the big chief says to be off with you. Says you have no more colour than a banshee, and not half the life—can't grasp the fact that it's just chronic antiquity. Fasten the collar about your throat—no, higher! Darlin', darlin', think of havin' a whole rippin' day to ourselves. You're glad, too, aren't you, my little stubborn saint?"

Oh, that joyous and heart-breaking voice, running on and on—it made all the other voices that she had ever heard seem colourless and unreal——

"Darlin' idiot, what do I care how old you are? Thirty, hey? Almost old enough to be an ancestor! Look at me—no, look at me. Dare you to say that you aren't mad about me!"

Mad about him; mad, mad. She lifted her hands to her ears, but she could no more shut out

the exultant voice now than she could on that windy afternoon.

"Other fellow got tired of you, did he? Good luck for us, what? You're a fearfully tiresome person, darlin'. It's goin' to take me nine tenths of eternity to tell you how tiresome you are. Give a chap a chance, won't you? The tiresomest thing about you is the way you leash up that dimple of yours. No, by George, there it is! Janie, look at me——"

She touched the place where the leashed dimple had hidden with a delicate and wondering finger—of all Jerry's gifts to her, the most miraculous had been that small fugitive. Exiled now, for ever and for ever.

"Are you comin' down to White Orchards next week-end? I'm off for France on the twelfth and you've simply got to meet my people. You'll be insane about 'em; Rosemary's the most beguilin' flibbertigibbet, and I can't wait to see you bein' a kind of an elderly grandmother to her. What a bewitchin' little grandmother you're goin' to be one of these days——"

Oh, Jerry! Oh, Jerry, Jerry! She twisted in her chair, her face suddenly a small mask of incredulous terror. No, no, it wasn't true, it wasn't true—never—never—never! And then, for the first time, she heard it. Far off but clear, a fine

and vibrant humming, the distant music of wings! The faint, steady pulsing was drawing nearer and nearer—nearer still; it must be flying quite high. The letters scattered about her as she sprang to the open window; no, it was too high to see, and too dark, though the sky was powdered with stars, but she could hear it clearly, hovering and throbbing like some gigantic bird. It must be almost directly over her head, if she could only see it.

"It sounds—it sounds the way a humming-bird would look through a telescope," she said half aloud, and Rosemary murmured sleepily but courteously, "What, Janet?"

"Just an airplane; no, gone now. It sounded like a bird. Didn't you hear it?"

"No," replied Rosemary drowsily. "We get so used to the old things that we don't even notice them any more. Queer time to be flying."

"It sounded rather beautiful," said Janet, her face still turned to the stars. "Far off, but so clear and sure. I wonder—I wonder whether it will be coming back?"

Well, it came back. She went down to White Orchards with Rosemary for the following week-end, and after she had smoothed her hair and given a scornful glance at the pale face in the mirror, with its shadowy eyes and defiant mouth, she slipped out to the lower terrace for a breath

of the soft country air. Half way down the flight of steps she stumbled and caught at the balustrade, and stood shaking for a moment, her face pressed against its rough surface. Once before she had stumbled on those steps, but it was not the balustrade that had saved her. She could feel his arms about her now, holding her up, holding her close and safe. The magical voice was in her ears.

"Let you go? I'll never let you go! Poor little feet, stumblin' in the dark, what would you do without Jerry? Time's comin', you cheeky little devils, when you'll come runnin' to him when he whistles! No use tryin' to get away—you belong to him."

Oh, whistle to them now, Jerry—they would run to you across the stars!

"How'd you like to marry me before I go back to-morrow? No? No accountin' for tastes, Miss Abbott—lots of people would simply jump at it! All right, April, then. Birds and flowers and all that kind o' thing—pretty intoxicatin', what? No, keep still, darlin' goose. What feller taught you to wear a dress that looks like roses and smells like roses and feels like roses? This feller? Lord help us, what a lovely liar!"

And suddenly she found herself weeping helplessly, desperately, like an exhausted child, shaken to the heart at the memory of the rose-coloured dress.

"You like me just a bit, don't you, funny, quiet little thing? But you'd never lift a finger to hold me; that's the wonder of you—that's why I'll never leave you. No, not for heaven. You can't lose me—no use tryin'."

But she had lost you, Jerry; you had left her, for all your promises, to terrified weeping in the hushed loveliness of the terrace, where your voice had turned her still heart to a dancing star, where your fingers had touched her quiet blood to flowers and flames and butterflies. She had believed you then. What would she ever believe again? And then she caught back the despairing sobs swiftly, for once more she heard, far off, the rushing of wings. Nearer—nearer—humming and singing and hovering in the quiet dusk. Why, it was over the garden! She flung back her head, suddenly eager to see it; it was a friendly and thrilling sound in all that stillness. Oh, it was coming lower—lower still—she could hear the throb of the propellers clearly. Where *was* it? Behind those trees, perhaps? She raced up the flight of steps, dashing the treacherous tears from her eyes, straining up on impatient tiptoes. Surely she could see it now! But already it was growing fainter—drifting steadily away, the distant hum growing lighter and lighter—lighter still——

"Janet!" called Mrs. Langdon's pretty, patient

voice. "Dinner-time, dear! Is there any one with you?"

"No one at all, Mrs. Langdon. I was just listening to an airplane."

"An *airplane?* Oh, no, dear; they never pass this way any more. The last one was in October, I think——"

The plaintive voice trailed off in the direction of the dining room and Janet followed it, a small, secure smile touching her lips. The last one had not passed in October. It had passed a few minutes before, over the lower garden.

She quite forgot it by the next week; she was becoming an adept at forgetting. That was all that was left for her to do! Day after day and night after night she had raised the drawbridge between her heart and memory, leaving the lonely thoughts to shiver desolately on the other side of the moat. She was weary to the bone of suffering, and they were enemies, for all their dear and friendly guise; they would tear her to pieces if she ever let them in. No, no, she was done with them. She would forget, as Jerry had forgotten. She would destroy every link between herself and the past, and pack the neat little steamer trunk neatly and bid these kind and gentle people good-bye, and take herself and her bitterness and her dulness back to the classroom in the Western university

town—back to the Romance languages. The Romance languages!

She would finish it all that night, and leave as soon as possible. There were some trinkets to destroy, and his letters from France to burn; she would give Rosemary the rose-coloured dress—foolish, lovely little Rosemary, whom he had loved, and who was lying now fast asleep in the next room, curled up like a kitten in the middle of the great bed, her honey-coloured hair falling about her in a shining mist. She swept back her own cloud of hair resolutely, frowning at the candle-lit reflection in the mirror. Two desolate pools in the small, pale oval of her face stared back at her—two pools with something drowned in their lonely depths. Well, she would drown it deeper!

The letters first; lucky that they still used candlelight! It would make the task much simpler—the funeral pyre already lighted. She moved one of the tall candelabra to the desk, sitting for a long time quite still, her chin cupped in her hands, staring down at the bits of paper. She could smell the wall-flowers under the window as though they were in the room; drenched in dew and moonlight, they were reckless of their fragrance. All this peace and cleanliness and ordered beauty—what a ghastly trick for God to have played—to have taught her to adore them, and then to snatch them

away! All about her, warm with candlelight, lay the gracious loveliness of the little room with its dark waxed furniture, its bright glazed chintz, its narrow bed with the cool linen sheets smelling of lavender, and its straight, patterned curtains—oh, that hateful, mustard-coloured den at home with its golden-oak day-bed!

She wrung her hands suddenly in a little hunted gesture. How could he have left her to that, he who had sworn that he would never leave her? In every one of those letters beneath her linked fingers he had sworn it—in every one perjured—false half a hundred times. Pick up any one of them at random——

"Janie, you darling stick, is 'dear Jerry' the best that you can do? You ought to learn French! I took a perfectly ripping French kid out to dinner last night—name's Liane, from the Varietiés—and she was calling me '*mon grand chéri*' before the salad, and '*mon p'tit amour*' before the green mint. Maybe *that'll* buck you up! And I'd have you know that she's so pretty that it's ridiculous, with black velvet hair that she wears like a little Oriental turban, and eyes like golden pansies, and a mouth between a kiss and a prayer, and a nice affable nature into the bargain. But I'm a ghastly jackass—I didn't get any fun out of it at all—because I really didn't even see her. Under the

pink shaded candles to my blind eyes it seemed that there was seated the coolest, quietest, whitest little thing, with eyes that were as indifferent as my velvety Liane's were kind, and mockery in her smile. Oh, little masquerader! If I could get my arms about you even for a minute—if I could kiss so much as the tips of your lashes—would you be cool and quiet and mocking then? Janie, Janie, rosy-red as flowers on the terrace and sweeter—sweeter—they're about you now—they'll be about you always!"

Burn it fast, candle—faster, faster. Here's another for you!

"So the other fellow cured you of using pretty names, did he—you don't care much for dear and darling any more? Bit hard on me, but fortunately for you, Janie Janet, I'm rather a dab at languages, 'specially when it comes to 'cozy names.' *Querida mi alma*, *douchka*, *Herzliebchen*, *carissima*, and *bien*, *bien-aimée*, I'll not run out of salutations for you this side of heaven—no, nor t'other. I adore the serene grace with which you ignore the ravishing Liane Haven't you any curiosity at all, my Sphinx? No? Well, then, just to punish you, I'll tell you all about it. She's married to the best fellow in the world, a *liaison* officer working with our squadron—and she worships the ground that he walks on and the air that

he occasionally flies in. So whenever I run up to the City of Light, *en permission*, I look her up, and take her the latest news—and for an hour, over the candles, we pretend that I am Maurice, and that she is Janie. Only she says that I don't pretend very well—and it's just possible that she's right.

"*Mon petit cœur et grand trésor*, I wish that I could take you flying with me this evening. You'd be daft about it! Lots of it's a rotten bore, of course, but there's something in me that doesn't live at all when I'm on this too, too solid earth. Something that lies there, crouched and dormant, waiting until I've climbed up into the seat, and buckled the strap about me and laid my hands on the 'stick.' It's waiting—waiting for a word—and so am I. And I lean far forward, watching the figure toiling out beyond till the call comes back to me, clear and confident: 'Contact, sir?' And I shout back, as restless and exultant as the first time that I answered it: 'Contact!'

"And I'm off—and I'm alive—and I'm free! Ho, Janie! That's simpler than Abracadabra or Open Sesame, isn't it? But it opens doors more magical than ever they swung wide, and something in me bounds through, more swift and eager than any Aladdin. Free! I'm a crazy sort of a beggar, my little love—that same thing in me hungers and thirsts and aches for freedom. I go half mad

when people or events try to hold me; you, wise beyond wisdom, never will. Somehow, between us, we've struck the spark that turns a mere piece of machinery into a wonder with wings; somehow, you are for ever setting me free. It is your voice, your voice of silver and peace, that's eternally whispering 'Contact!' to me—and I am released, heart, soul, and body! And because you speed me on my way, Janie, I'll never fly so far, I'll never fly so long, I'll never fly so high that I'll not return to you. You hold me fast, for ever and for ever."

You had flown high and far indeed, Jerry—and you had not returned. For ever and for ever! Burn faster, flame!

"My blessed child, who's been frightening you? Airplanes are by all odds safer than taxis, and no end safer than the infernal duffer who's been chaffing you would be if I could once get my hands on him. Damn fool! Don't care if you do hate swearing; damn fools are damn fools, and there's an end to it. All those statistics are sheer melodramatic rot; the chap who fired 'em at you probably has all his money invested in submarines, and is fairly delirious with jealousy. Peg (did I ever formally introduce you to Pegasus, the best pursuit-plane in the R. F. C.—or out of it?) Peg's about as likely to let me down as you are! We'd do a good deal for each other, she and I; nobody

else can really fly her, the darling! But she'd go to the stars for me—and farther still. Never you fear—we have charmed lives, Peg and I—we belong to Janie.

"I think that people make an idiotic row about dying, anyway. It's probably jolly good fun, and I can't see what difference a few years here would make if you're going to have all eternity to play with. Of course you're a ghastly little heathen, and I can see you wagging a mournful head over this already—but every time that I remember what a shocking sell the After Life (exquisite phrase!) is going to be for you, darling, I do a bit of head-wagging myself, and it's not precisely mournful! I can't wait to see your blank consternation, and you needn't expect any sympathy from *me*. My very first words will be, 'I told you so!' Maybe I'll rap them out to you with a table-leg!

"What do you think of all this Ouija Planchette rumpus, anyway? I can't for the life of me see why any one with a whole new world to explore should hang around chattering with this one. I know that I'd be half mad with excitement to get at the new job, and that I'd find re-assuring the loved ones (exquisite phrase number two) a hideous bore. Still, I can see that it would be nice from their selfish point of view! Well, I'm no ghost yet, thank God, nor yet are you—but if

ever I am one, I'll show you what devotion really is. I'll come all the way back from heaven to play with foolish Janie, who doesn't believe that there is one to come from. To foolish, foolish Janie, who will still be dearer than the prettiest angel of them all, no matter how alluringly her halo may be tilted or her wings ruffled. To Janie who, Heaven forgive him, will be all that one poor ghost has ever loved!"

Had there come to him, the radiant and the confident, a moment of terrible and shattering surprise—a moment when he realized that there were no pretty angels with shining wings waiting to greet him—a moment when he saw before him only the overwhelming darkness, blacker and deeper than the night would be, when she blew out the little hungry flame that was eating up the sheet that held his laughter? Oh, gladly would she have died a thousand deaths to have spared him that moment!

"My little Greatheart, did you think that I did not know how brave you are? You are the truest soldier of us all, and I, who am not much given to worship, am on my knees before that shy gallantry of yours, which makes what courage we poor duffers have seem a vain and boastful thing. When I see you as I saw you last, small and white and clear and brave, I can't think of anything but the first

crocuses at White Orchards, shining out, demure and valiant, fearless of wind and storm and cold—fearless of Fear itself. You see, you're so very, very brave that you make me ashamed to be afraid of poetry and sentiment and pretty words—things of which I have a good, thumping Anglo-Saxon terror, I can tell you! It's because I know what a heavenly brick you are that I could have killed that statistical jackass for bothering you; but I'll forgive him, since you say that it's all right. And so ghosts are the only thing in the world that frighten you—even though you know that there aren't any. You and Madame de Staël, hey? 'I do not believe in ghosts, but I fear them!' It's pretty painful to learn that the mere sight of one would turn you into a gibbering lunatic. Nice sell for an enthusiastic spirit who'd romped clear back from heaven to give you a pleasant surprise—I *don't* think! Well, no fear, young Janie; I'll find some way if I'm put to it—some nice, safe, pretty way that wouldn't scare a neurasthenic baby, let alone the dauntless Miss Abbott. I'll find——"

Oh, no more of that; no more! She crushed the sheet in her hands fiercely, crumpling it into a little ball; the candle-flame was too slow. No, she couldn't stand it—she couldn't, she couldn't, and there was an end to it. She would go raving mad

—she would kill herself—she would—— She lifted her head, wrenched suddenly back from that chaos of despair, alert and intent. There it was again, coming swiftly nearer and nearer from some immeasurable distance—down—down—nearer still—the very room was humming and throbbing with it, she could almost hear the singing in the wires. She swung far out over the window edge, searching the moon-drenched garden with eager eyes; surely, surely it would never fly so low unless it were about to land! Engine trouble, perhaps, though she could detect no break in the huge, rhythmic pulsing that was shaking the night. Still——

"Rosmary!" she called urgently. "Rosemary, listen—is there a place where it can land?"

"Where what can land?" asked a drowsy voice.

"An airplane. It's flying so low that it must be in some kind of trouble; do come and see!"

Rosemary came pattering obediently toward her, a small docile figure, dark eyes misted with dreams, wide with amazement.

"I must be nine tenths asleep," she murmured gently. "Because I don't hear a single thing, Janet. Perhaps——"

"Hush—listen!" begged Janet, raising an imperative hand—and then her own eyes widened.

"Why—it's *gone!*" There was a note of flat incredulity in her voice. "Heavens, how those things must eat up space! Not a minute ago it was fairly shaking this room, and now——"

Rosemary stifled a yawn and smiled ingratiatingly.

"Perhaps you were asleep, too," she suggested humbly. "I don't believe that airplanes ever fly this way any more. Or it might have been that fat Hodges boy on his motorcycle; he does make the most dreadful racket. Oh, Janet, what a perfectly *ripping* night—do see!"

They leaned together on the window-sill, silenced by the white and shining beauty that had turned the pleasant garden into a place of magic. The corners of Janet's mouth lifted suddenly. How absurd people were! The fat Hodges boy and his motorcycle! Did they all regard her as an amiable lunatic, even little, friendly Rosemary, wavering sleepily at her side? It really was maddening. But she felt, amazingly enough, suddenly quiet and joyous and indifferent—and passionately glad that the wanderer from the skies had won safely through and was speeding home. Home! Oh, it was a crying pity that it need ever land; anything so fleet and strong and sure should fly for ever! But if they must rest, those beating wings—the old R. F. C. toast went singing through

her head and she flung it out into the moonlight, smiling—"Happy landings! Happy landings, you!"

The next day was the one that brought to White Orchards what was to be known for many moons as "the Big Storm." It had been gathering all afternoon, and by evening the heat had grown incredible, even to Janet's American and exigent standards. The smouldering copper sky looked as though it had caught fire from the world and would burn for ever; there was not so much as a whisper of air to break the stillness—it seemed as though the whole tortured earth were holding its breath, waiting to see what would happen next. Everyone had struggled through the day assuring one another that when evening came it would be all right, dangling the alluring thought of the cool darkness before each other's hot and weary eyes; but the night proved even more outrageous than the day. To the little group seated on the terrace, dispiritedly playing with their coffee, it seemed almost a personal affront. The darkness closed in on them, smothering, heavy, intolerable; they could feel its weight, as though it were some hateful and tangible thing.

"Like—like black cotton wool," explained Rosemary, stirred to unwonted resentment. She had spent the day curled up in the largest Indian chair

on the terrace, round-eyed with fatigue and incredulity.

"I honestly think that we must be dreaming," she murmured to her feverish audience; "I do, honestly. Why, it's only *May*, and we never, never—there was that day in August about five years ago that was almost as bad, though. D'you remember, Mummy?"

"It's hardly the kind of thing that one is likely to forget, dear. Do you think that it is necessary for us to talk? I feel somehow that I could bear it much more easily if we kept quite quiet."

Janet stirred a little, uneasily. She hated silence, that terrible empty space waiting to be filled up with your thoughts—why, the idlest chatter spared you that. She hated the terrace, too—she closed her eyes to shut out the ugly darkness that was pressing against her; behind the shelter of her lids it was cooler and stiller, but open eyed or closed, she could not shut out memory. The very touch of the bricks beneath her feet brought back that late October day. She had been sitting curled up on the steps in the warm sunlight, with the keen, sweet air stirring her hair and sending the beech-leaves dancing down the flagged path; there had been a heavenly smell of burning from the far meadow, and she was sniffing it luxuriously, feeling warm and joyous and protected in Jerry's

great tweed coat, watching the tall figure swinging across from the lodge gate with idle, happy eyes—not even curious. It was not until he had almost reached the steps that she had noticed that he was wearing a foreign uniform—and even then she had promptly placed him as one of Rosemary's innumerable conquests, bestowing on him a friendly and inquiring smile.

"Were you looking for Miss Langdon?" Even now she could see the courteous, grave young face soften as he turned quickly toward her, baring his dark head with that swift foreign grace that turns our perfunctory habits into something like a ritual.

"But no," he had said gently, "I was looking for you, Miss Abbott."

"Now will you please tell me how in the world you knew that I was Miss Abbott?"

And he had smiled with his lips, not his eyes.

"I should be dull indeed if that I did not know. I am Maurice Laurent, Miss Abbott."

And "Oh," she had cried joyously, "Liane's Maurice!"

"But yes—Liane's Maurice. They are not here, the others? Madame Langdon, the little Miss Rosemary?"

"No, they've gone to some parish fair, and I've been wicked and stayed home. Won't you sit down and talk to me? Please!"

"Miss Abbott, it is not to you that I must talk. What I have to say is indeed most difficult, and it is to Jeremy's Janie that I would say it. May I, then?"

It had seemed to Jeremy's Janie that the voice in which she answered him came from a great distance, but she never took her eyes from the grave and vivid face.

"Yes. And quickly, please."

So he had told her, quickly, in his exquisitely careful English, and she had listened as attentively and politely, huddled up on the brick steps in the sunlight, as though he were running over the details of the last drive instead of tearing her life to pieces with every word. She remembered now that it hadn't seemed real at all; if it had been to Jerry that these horrors had happened could she have sat there so quietly, feeling the colour bright in her cheeks, and the wind stirring in her hair, and the sunlight warm on her hands? Why, for less than this people screamed, and fainted, and went raving mad!

"You say—that his back is broken?"

"But yes, my dear," Liane's Maurice told her, and she had seen the tears shining in his gray eyes.

"And he is badly burned?"

"My brave Janie, these questions are not good to ask; not good, not good to answer. This I will

tell you. He lives, our Jerry—and so dearly does he love you that he will drag back that poor body from hell itself, because it is yours, not his. This he has sent me to tell you, most lucky lady ever loved."

"You mean—that he isn't going to die?"

"I tell you that into those small hands of yours he has given his life. Hold it fast."

"Will he—will he get well?"

"He will not walk again; but have you not swift feet to run for him?"

And there had come to her, sitting on the terrace in the sunshine, an overwhelming flood of joy, reckless and cruel and triumphant. Now he was hers for ever, the restless wanderer, delivered to her bound and helpless, never to stray again. Hers to worship and serve and slave for, his troth to Freedom broken—hers at last!

"I'm coming," she had told the tall young Frenchman breathlessly. "Take me to him—please let's hurry."

"*Ma pauvre petite,* this is war. One does not come and go at will. God knows by what miracle enough red tape unwound to let me through to you, to bring my message and to take one back."

"What message, Maurice?"

"That is for you to say, little Janie. He told me, 'Say to her that she has my heart; if she needs

my body, I will live. Say to her that it is an ugly, broken, and useless thing; still, hers. She must use it as she sees fit. Say to her—no, say nothing more. She is my Janie, and has no need of words. Tell her to send me only one, and I will be content.' For that one word, Janie, I have come many miles. What shall it be?"

And she had cried out exultantly, "Why, tell him that I say——" But the word had died in her throat. Her treacherous lips had mutinied, and she had sat there, feeling the blood drain back out of her face, out of her heart—feeling her eyes turn black with terror while she fought with those stiffened rebels. Such a little word "Live!"—surely they could say that. Was it not what he was waiting for, lying far away and still, schooled at last to patience, the reckless and the restless? Oh, Jerry, Jerry, live! Even now she could feel her mind like some frantic little wild thing, racing, racing to escape Memory. What had he said to her? "You, wise beyond wisdom, will never hold me—you will never hold me—you will never——"

And suddenly she had dropped her twisted hands in her lap and lifted her eyes to Jerry's ambassador.

"Will you please tell him—will you please tell him that I say—'Contact'?"

"Contact?" He had stood smiling down at her, ironical and tender. "Ah, what a race! That is the prettiest word that you can find for Jerry? But then it means to come very close, to touch, that poor harsh word—there he must find what comfort he can. We, too, in aviation use that word; it is the signal that says—'Now you can fly!' You do not know our vocabulary, perhaps?"

"I know very little."

"That is all then? No other message? He will understand, our Jerry?"

And Janie had smiled—rather a terrible, small smile.

"Oh, yes," she told him. "He will understand. It is the word that he is waiting for, you see."

"I see." But there had been a grave wonder in his voice.

"Would it"— she had framed the words as carefully as though it were a strange tongue that she was speaking—"would it be possible to buy his machine? He wouldn't want any one else to fly it."

"Little Janie, never fear. The man does not live who shall fly poor Peg again. Smashed to kindling-wood and burned to ashes, she has taken her last flight to the heaven for good and brave birds of war. Not enough was left of her to hold in your two hands."

"I'm glad. Then that's all, isn't it? And thank you for coming."

"It is I who thank you. What was hard as death you have made easy. I had thought the lady to whom Jeremy Langdon gave his heart the luckiest creature ever born—now I think him that luckiest one." The grave grace with which he had bent to kiss her hand made of the formal salutation an accolade. "My homage to you, Jerry's Janie!" A quick salute, and he had turned on his heel, swinging off down the flagged path with that swift, easy stride past the sun-dial, past the lily-pond, past the beech trees—gone! For hours and hours after he had passed out of sight she had sat staring after him, her hands lying quite still in her lap—staring, staring—they had found her there when they came back, sitting where Rosemary was seated now. Why, there, on those same steps, a bare six months ago—— Something snapped in her head, and she stumbled to her feet, clinging to the arm of her chair.

"I can't *stand* it!" she gasped. "No, no, it's no use—I can't, I tell you. I——"

Rosemary's arm was about her, Mrs. Langdon's soft voice in her ears, a deeper note from Rosemary's engineer.

"Oh, I say, poor girl! What is it, dear child—what's the matter? Is it the heat, Janie?"

"The heat!" She could hear herself laughing; frantic, hateful, jangling laughter that wouldn't stop. "Oh, Jerry! Oh-h, Jerry, Jerry, Jerry!"

"It's this ghastly day. Let me get her some water, Mrs. Langdon. Don't cry so, Janie—please, please don't, darling."

"I c-can't help it—I c-can't——" She paused, listening intently, her hand closing sharply over Rosemary's wrist. "Oh, listen, listen, there it comes again—I told you so!"

"Thank Heaven," murmured Mrs. Langdon devoutly, "I thought that it never was going to rise this evening. It's from the south, too, so I suppose that it means rain."

"Rain?" repeated Janet vaguely. "Why in the world should it mean rain?" Her small, pale face looked suddenly brilliant and enchanted, tilted up to meet the thunderous music that was swinging nearer and nearer. "Oh, do listen, you people! This time it's surely going to land!"

Rosemary stared at her blankly. "Land? What *are* you talking about, Janie?"

"My airplane—the one that you said was the fat Hodges boy on a motorcycle! Is there any place near here that it can make a landing?"

"Darling child"—Mrs. Langdon's gentle voice was gentler than ever—"darling child, it's this

wretched heat. There isn't any airplane, dear; it's just the wind rising in the beeches."

"The wind?" Janet laughed aloud; they really were too absurd. "Why, Mrs. Langdon, you can hear the *engines*, if you'll only listen! You can hear them, can't you, Mr. Bain?"

The young engineer shook his head. "No plane would risk flying with this storm coming, Miss Abbott. There's been thunder for the last hour or so, and it's getting nearer, too. It's only the wind, I think."

"Oh, you're laughing at me; of course, of course you hear it. Why, it's as clear as—as clear as——"

Her voice trailed off into silence. Quite suddenly, without any transition or warning, she knew. She could feel her heart stand perfectly still for a minute, and then plunge forward in mad flight—oh, it knew, too, that eager heart! She took her hand from the arm of the chair, releasing Rosemary's wrist very gently.

"Yes, of course, it's the heat," she said quietly. She must be careful not to frighten them, these kind ones. "If you don't mind, Mrs. Langdon, I think that I'll go down to the gate to watch the storm burst. No, please, don't any of you come; I'll promise to change everything if I get caught—yes, everything! I won't be long; don't wait for me."

She walked sedately enough until she came to the turn in the path, but after that she ran, only pausing for a minute to listen breathlessly. Oh, yes—following, following, that gigantic music! How he must be laughing at her now, blind, deaf, incredulous little fool that she had been, to doubt that Jerry would find a way! But where could he land? Not in the garden—not at the gates—oh, now she had it—the far meadow. She turned sharply; it was dark, but the path must be here. Yes, this was the wicket gate; her groping fingers were quite steady; they found the latch, released it—the gate swung to behind her flying footsteps. "Oh, Jerry, Jerry!" sang her heart. Why hadn't she worn the rose-coloured frock? It was she who would be a ghost in that trailing white thing. To the right here; yes, there was the hawthorn hedge—only a few steps more—oh, now!

She stood as still as a small statue, not moving, not breathing, her hands at her heart, her face turned to the black and torn sky. Nearer, nearer, circling and darting and swooping; the gigantic humming grew louder—louder still—it swept about her thunderously, so close that she clapped her hands over her ears, but she stood her ground, exultant and undaunted. Oh, louder still—and then suddenly the storm broke. All the winds and the rains of the world were unleashed, and fell

howling and shrieking upon her; she staggered under their onslaught, drenched to the bone, her dress whipping frantically about her, blinded and deafened by that tumultuous clamour. She had only one weapon against it—laughter—and she laughed now, straight into its teeth. And as though hell itself must yield to mirth, the fury wavered—failed—sank to muttering. But Janie, beaten to her knees and laughing, never even heard it die.

"Jerry?" she whispered into the darkness, "Jerry?"

Oh, more wonderful than wonder, he was there! She could feel him stir, even if she could not hear him; so close was he that if she even reached out her hand, she could touch him. She stretched it out eagerly, but there was nothing there—only a small, remote sound of withdrawal, as though someone had moved a little.

"You're afraid that I'll be frightened, aren't you?" she asked wistfully. "I wouldn't be—I wouldn't—please come back!"

He was laughing at her, she knew, tender and mocking and caressing; she smiled back, tremulously.

"You're thinking, 'I told you so!' Have you come far to say it to me?"

Only that little stir; the wind was rising again.

"Jerry, come close—come closer still. What are you waiting for, dear and dearest?"

This time there was not even a stir to answer her; she felt suddenly cold to the heart. What had he always waited for?

"You aren't waiting—you aren't waiting to go?" She fought to keep the terror out of her voice, but it had her by the throat. "Oh, no, no, you can't —not again! Jerry, Jerry, don't go away and leave me; truly and truly I can't stand it—truly!"

She wrung her hands together desperately; she was on her knees to him—did he wish her to go lower still? Oh, she had never learned to beg!

Not a sound, not a stir, but well she knew that he was standing there, waiting. She rose slowly to her feet.

"Very well—you've won," she said hardly. "Go back to your saints and seraphs and angels; I'm beaten. I was mad to think that you ever cared—go back!"

She turned, stumbling, the sobs tearing at her throat; she had gone several steps before she realized that he was following her—and all the hardness and bitterness and despair fell from her like a cloak.

"Oh, Jerry," she whispered, "Jerry, darling, I'm so sorry. And you've come so far—just to find this! What is it that you want; can't you tell me?"

She waited tense and still, straining eyes and ears for her answer—but it was not to eyes or ears that it came.

"Oh, of course!" she cried clearly. "Of course, my wanderer! Ready?"

She stood poised for a second, head thrown back, arms flung wide, a small figure of Victory, caught in the flying wind.

And, "Contact, Jerry!" she called joyously into the darkness. "Contact!"

There was a mighty whirring, a thunder and a roaring above the storm. She stood listening breathlessly to it rise and swell, and then grow fainter—fainter still—dying, dying—dying——

But Janie, her face turned to the storm-swept sky, was smiling at the stars which shone behind it. For she had sped her wanderer on his way—she had not failed him!

MR. JACK HOLLINS AGAINST FATE

A SHORT STORY BY

Arnold Bennett

FROM "ELSIE AND THE CHILD"

In this story of Jack Hollins, who thought Fate would yield to the same will and dominance that made him a colossal business success, Mr. Bennett applies that deft skill and genius which has made "The Old Wives' Tale," a classic of the century.

MR. JACK HOLLINS AGAINST FATE

I

MR. JACK HOLLINS sat reading the paper at the drawing-room window on the first-floor of his enormous house in Carlos Place, within a stone's throw of Grosvenor Square. It was a London afternoon, mild, languorous, and full of subtle colour—full also of baffling promises. But Mr. Jack Hollins was only aware that the date was the twenty-first of May and the locality the finest residential locality in the West End of London.

He was a stout man of sixty, with a thick neck, short white hair, and a clean-shaven red face, neatly dressed in a provincial style. His figure was such that though the easy-chair was capacious and he deeply ensconced in it, he seemed to be protruding out of it or hanging over the front of it. His eyes had a wary and dour expression, as though saying to the newspaper that the newspaper might fool half a million people but not him. He had once had a brother, Herbert Hollins, with a reputation throughout half the Midlands for hearty tyrannical ruthlessness and a will-power that rode down all obstacles—heaven, nature and mankind. Herbert fell ill once of pneumonia and said to his doctor, "I've got a director's meeting at Birmingham to-morrow, and I'm going to it." "I forbid you to go out," said the doctor. "I'm going to that meeting," said Herbert with terrible finality. "Very well,

then," said the doctor quietly. "As you please, but if you go out you'll die." Herbert laughed, convinced that he was above the common laws of cause and effect. He did go to the meeting and he did die. Mr. Jack Hollins used to recount this story with grim gusto, as creditable to his brother's character. Herbert, a widower like himself—their wives had both failed to survive the ordeal of living with them—left Mr. Jack Hollins half a million pounds. Jack was very rich even before that. At first he had made a little money by hard work; then he had made a great deal by a fluky investment in a company that owned cheap restaurants in various Midland towns. Thence onwards he was persuaded, and others were persuaded, that he had a genius for finance, and events certainly favoured this notion of his. In proceeding upon the principle that money breeds money, he had one inflexible rule; never to sell out at a loss. If a stock went down he held it obstinately, positive that since he held it and was a financial genius, it must ultimately rise. Often it did rise, and Mr. Jack Hollins's self-satisfaction rose with it. Occasionally, however, the company would go bankrupt, and then Mr. Jack Hollins had a momentary vague suspicion that he might have done better to spend his money instead of trying to force it to breed.

But he had a very serious and vexatious defect. Though he could make money he knew not how to spend. He was always being half-drowned under the flowing tide of wealth. He privately recognised the defect, admitting that he was a bungler in expenditure. The fact was that he had almost no imagination, and very few desires. He had bought the house in Carlos Place by a whim, a caprice, an impulse. It was very cheap. He noticed that business was grad-

ually invading the region, and he thought that one day the place could be turned into a private hotel or a block of offices, at much profit. Having bought it, he had to furnish it. He employed a big furnishing firm. The cost of things generally startled him, whose youth had passed in the narrowest commercial provincialism, but he would pretend not to be startled. When the furnishing firm had furnished two floors he suddenly stopped them, not because the expense frightened him, but because he could not see the sense of furnishing two other floors which he could never use.

He had a dim idea that Carlos Place demanded a butler, and he engaged one. As, however, he did not know how to treat butlers he did not get value out of his fine specimen. He bought the finest cigars obtainable, and smoked them, but improperly. He bought the finest wines possible, but he could not tell a burgundy from a claret, or a champagne from a sparkling Moselle. He bought a magnificent motor-car; to roll ruthlessly in it through the best streets pleased his vanity, but the car was all the same somewhat of a Frankenstein's monster to him.

He enjoyed a moderate amount of solitary travel, and would make acquaintances in the saloons of steamships, and in the smoking-rooms of first-rate large hotels in fashionable health resorts. He had no friends, didn't need friends. He showed sagacity in not attempting election to a good club; he would have met with trouble in a good club; not the most ruthless man can successfully contend against a whole club; but he sometimes walked along Pall Mall enviously.

The magnificent motor-car, with its chauffeur, was below him, waiting at the kerb. It had been waiting for two hours. He argued thus: "It's my car. I pay the chauffeur. I might want to go for a ride and I

might not. Why shouldn't the fellow wait?" The argument seemed to him unanswerable. He gazed critically at the car. Then he resumed the newspaper and read an account of the new clinic which Mr. Shelton Shelton had built and endowed and presented to West Ham. He knew that Mr. Shelton Shelton was the owner of the newspaper and a very rich man who by dint of creating free clinics all over London had become one of our leading philanthropists.

A small and insignificant car, driven by a young man of military and aristocratic deportment, drove up to the door. An elegantly dressed young woman jumped out; the aristocrat chatted an instant with her, saluted her, and drove off again.

"Who's your man, my lass?" Mr. Hollins gruffly greeted the girl when she entered the drawing-room.

"Captain Coggleshall," said she, in a tranquil, low voice, with no trace of self-consciousness.

"What brand of a Captain?"

"In the First Lifeguards."

Mr. Jack Hollins, anxious above everything not to show emotion, said nothing for a few moments.

"Who is he, anyway?"

"He's the eldest son of Sir Maurice Coggleshall, Baronet, ninth Baronet, I believe, or perhaps it's only eighth."

Then Samuels, the butler, conveniently brought in tea, of which Minnie partook, but not her father.

"Where did you meet him?"

"At a *thé dansant* at Queen's Hall. I was with Sarah Allbright; she knew him. He's interested in painting."

"How long since?"

"Oh! About three months ago."

The conversation ended there.

Minnie Hollins opened the lofty window, and, with the earnest eye of an art-student estimated the "values" of the surrounding architecture, foliage, pavements and sky, and sought for possible "subjects" therein. She also responded sensitively to the delicate calm beauty of the afternoon. There was something in the softness of the clouds and in the faces of passers-by that touched her. She was a tall, well-made girl, with a figure whose excellences none would dispute, and a type of countenance which most women would call beautiful and most men would not. Her gaze was patient and benevolent.

Mr. Jack Hollins continued doggedly to read the paper, just as though he had been alone in the drawing-room. Mrs. Hollins had been dead six years. He had then been faced with the problem of looking after a girl, aged seventeen and delivered from boarding-school, without letting her be a nuisance to him. Having complete confidence in her because she was his daughter, he had solved the problem chiefly by ignoring it. A girl living in a big house in Carlos Place must be well-dressed. He went further and said that she might be very well-dressed. She had to dress herself, and he was satisfied with her efforts; indeed he was as proud of her appearance as he was of the appearance of his car. But he paid all the bills. She had no allowance, and not too much pocket-money, considering her exalted position. Similarly, though she attended to certain branches of the housekeeping, Mr. Hollins was the sole authoritative housekeeper, paying all bills and giving nearly all orders. To Samuels Minnie would begin: "Father says—"

Mr. Hollins's deep sagacity told him that a girl must do something in order to keep her out of mischief, and the choice of what she did was not important. He

saw no harm in her learning to paint, and so she was permitted to go to the Slade School. He saw no harm, either, in her creating a studio from an attic. He never entered the attic if she was there, but occasionally when she was out he would nose around. At the Slade she made friends, and the girls among them she would now and then ask to tea, but in the back room on the ground-floor, and without her father. There was absolutely no other entertaining. With the same friends she would go to infrequent concerts and plays, and semi-public or club dances. Secure in the conviction that she was no fool, Mr. Hollins let her be —on the clear, hard understanding that she let him be. They went to church together about once a fortnight; and perhaps once a year he would take her with him on a voyage. He seldom questioned her. He never kissed her.

One night a fortnight after the conversation about Captain Coggleshall, Minnie said:

"Captain Coggleshall wants to come and see you, father."

"Who's he?"

"You remember—I told you about him. He's in the First Lifeguards."

"Oh!"

"Can he come to-morrow?"

"He can come when he's a mind to. But whether I shall be in's another matter."

"I'll write and ask him to come to-morrow afternoon."

As she left the room Mr. Hollins surreptitiously examined his girl for traces of emotional excitement, but he could find none. He looked up Sir Maurice Coggleshall, Bart., in Whitaker's Almanack. Yes, Sir Maurice duly existed.

Captain Coggleshall came in the insignificant car the next afternoon and was introduced to Mr. Jack Hollins by Minnie, who at once departed, leaving them together.

"So this is a Captain in the First Lifeguards and the eldest son of a ninth Baronet!" said Mr. Hollins to himself sardonically. If Mr. Hollins had not been very rich he might have been nervous, but he was very rich—both in money and in his daughter. Captain Coggleshall corresponded quite satisfactorily with Mr. Hollins's notion of what a Captain in the First Lifeguards and the eldest son of a ninth Baronet ought to be. He was handsome, muscular, slim, well tailored, had an admirable natural demeanour, and was free from self-consciousness. He sat down with an ease that Mr. Hollins could not have emulated, and talked with facility and yet with proper restraint. Only his voice was rather quieter than Mr. Hollins would have expected. After a few exchanges Captain Coggleshall announced that he wished to marry Minnie. He gave his age, which was thirty-one, and his record, and his expectations. He admitted that for the present he had nothing but his Captain's pay and what Sir Maurice allowed him, which was not much, because Sir Maurice was poor.

"Ho!" ejaculated Mr. Hollins.

"I should like to know, as soon as it is convenient to you to tell me," said Captain Coggleshall, "whether in principle you have any objection to the marriage," without adding anything about feeling himself to be quite unworthy of the peerless girl.

"I don't say that I have, and I don't say that I haven't," Mr. Hollins answered with brutal indifference. "But have you got enough to keep my daughter decently? Or haven't you?"

"Enough to keep us from starving, Mr. Hollins. But my father and I were hoping that you would do the usual thing and make a settlement."

"Ye were, were ye? Well, as you've mentioned your father, perhaps the old gentleman had better come and see me." He would not refer to the Captain's parent as "Sir Maurice." No, he would not!

"My father lives in Northumberland," said Captain Coggleshall with undiminished suavity.

"And what if he does?" asked Mr. Hollins. "This business is worth a journey to London, isn't it? Or doesn't the old gentleman think so?" He spoke as it were menacingly.

Captain Coggleshall replied that he would try to secure his father's presence in Carlos Place. A few minutes later he took leave. Mr. Hollins rose and accompanied his guest as far as the door of the drawing-room, and then remembered that he ought to have rung the bell to warn Samuels to be in attendance. He called out "Samuels" loudly over the bannisters of the great staircase, shook hands firmly with the suitor, and returned to his seat by the drawing-room window. He said not a word about the interview to Minnie, and she showed no curiosity; but naturally she had her private source of information.

The next morning at breakfast he said:

"So you'd leave me to fend for myself?"

"Yes, father," said her father's daughter, with a quiet, unfathomable, benevolent smile.

That ended the family conversation on the mighty subject.

Money is wonderful. Two days later Sir Maurice Coggleshall made a personal call upon Mr. Jack Hollins. Sir Maurice conceived that he was performing a really very astonishing act of condescension. But

being a gentleman, or the ruins of one, he kept this conception absolutely to himself and to his son Marmion. Upon the arrival of Sir Maurice it seemed to Samuels the butler that things were looking up a bit in Carlos Place. Visits from two obviously real gentlemen, one of them titled, and with an adorably curt, imperious and curse-you-for-a-flunkey manner, exhilarated Samuels, and he became a better butler for a time. The style in which he showed Sir Maurice to the drawing-room left little to be desired. Indeed Sir Maurice asked himself how the deuce these upstart plutocrats contrived always to wipe up all the best butlers.

Sir Maurice was a very different man from his son. At the wheel of a taxi he could easily have passed for an old London cabby who had taken to mechanical transport late in life. He was stout and thick-necked like Mr. Jack Hollins. He had white hair, and luxuriant white eyebrows. He wore a black-and-white check suit, white spats, and a white tie. He moved quickly. His voice was enormous.

"How d'ye do, Sir Maurice," said Mr. Hollins; but do not imagine that he added: "Very good of you to come all this way to see me." For he did not.

However, he recognised in Sir Maurice a fellow creature, and did for him what he had not dreamt of doing for his son,—he ordered drinks and cigars. Sir Maurice puffed and blew and gulped and smacked, and talked loudly about railway trains, crop prospects, the prospects of revolution, and the folly of the nation. Then suddenly he said:

"By the way, Mr. Hollins, I suppose we can settle our little affair in two words. My son wants to marry your daughter. I agree. I had the pleasure of meet-

ing your daughter yesterday at Claridge's. And I can only repeat: I agree. I agree. If you do—"

"Well, Sir Maurice, I'm like yourself. I'm not one for beating about the bush, and I can give you my answer in two words: I agree."

"That's a great whiskey, Mr. Hollins, if you'll allow me to say so. What settlement do you intend to make on Miss Minnie? Roughly speaking, of course. I don't want to press for details. It's a matter for our lawyers."

Mr. Hollins replied harshly in a voice as loud as Sir Maurice's own:

"I'm not much for settlements."

"But surely you'll make a settlement, my good sir. It's the usual thing."

"It isn't the usual thing in my family. It may be in yours. But we're speaking of my daughter, and my daughter belongs to my family."

"But surely, my good sir—"

"As I say, I'm not one for beating about the bush, and if you'd like it straight, I shall make no settlement."

At this moment these two stout, thick-necked, red-faced old men grew stouter and thicker-necked and more red-faced, and it appeared to be a nice question which of them would explode first. But simultaneously they both reflected and saved themselves, by astounding efforts of self-control.

Mr. Jack Hollins spoke again:

"I'm not asking your son to marry my daughter. It's him and you as are asking me to let my daughter marry him. I'm not going to buy your son. It's the duty of a man to keep his wife, and if he can't do it he'd better not marry. If your son is marrying my daughter for my money, he can't have either. If he

isn't, let him prove it. That's how I look at it. If there's any hole in my argument, happen you'll tell me."

A pause. Sir Maurice finished his whiskey.

"I'll think it over," said he, dashed and irritated. "I'll think it over."

"Nay," said Mr. Hollins. "You'll decide at once, before you leave this room. If you don't, I shall. My daughter's my daughter, and there isn't going to be any hesitation."

"Do you mean—"

"Ay! I mean all of it. We're talking business and I mean all of it."

"You know, Mr. Hollins, you've succeeded in putting me in a very awkward position. I don't want to disappoint Marmion, and yet I have a duty a—er—serious duty—I appreciate your straightforward methods. I'm all in favour of straightforwardness. Saves trouble in the end. Of course! Of course!"

"Then you won't take my daughter as she is?"

"No, Mr. Hollins, I don't say that. I must beg you not to put words into my mouth. I don't say that."

"Then you'll take her as she is?"

"I see no alternative, Mr. Hollins, and that's flat. I see no alternative but to accept your conditions. May I help myself?" Sir Maurice poured out more whiskey.

Mr. Jack Hollins became grimly happy. He had defeated the ancient Northumbrian family. Minnie would be Lady Coggleshall in due course, and he would hear servants refer to her as "her ladyship." His mood softened as the mood of Napoleon would soften in intimacy after vast triumphs.

"You needn't worry, Sir Maurice," said he. "My

will's made and has been this long time. Minnie's the sole legatee, and she'll come into fifty thousand pounds a year when I kick the bucket. And I don't mind telling you now, as we've come to an understanding, that I shall give her five thousand a year to do what she likes with. I'm a reasonable man—"

"You are. You are, indeed, Mr. Hollins. Very generous of you."

"But I can't be forced, and I can't be bullied."

Thus the marriage of Minnie Hollins and Marmion Coggleshall, captain in the First Lifeguards and heir to an ancient baronetcy, duly came to pass. Mr. Jack Hollins behaved characteristically. First he said to his daughter:

"Look here, my lass, none o' this fashionable wedding nonsense, or you won't have your father at your wedding."

"Oh, father!" answered Minnie softly. "I should hate it. So would Marmion. You needn't trouble about that. We'll have the marriage at the registry-office, and I'll be married in my going-away dress."

The plan was altered, and it was altered by her father, little by little. The old man couldn't get the idea of orange-blossoms out of his head, nor the vision of his daughter in a white dress and veil. He had insisted at first that the wedding-party should consist of the two persons chiefly concerned and two witnesses, himself and Sir Maurice. And to this he adhered strictly, because he was afraid that in the midst of a concourse he might make himself ridiculous. In all other respects, however, the wedding was fashionable. The wedding breakfast was of the highest sumptuousness, like the bridal dress. The ceremony took place at St. George's, Hanover Square, and the red cloth was laid on the pavement for it and the awning erected

above the red cloth, and the usual crowd gathered and was universally disappointed by the fewness of the party.

After the register was signed Minnie kissed her father, thus thoughtfully saving him the agony of making the first move to kiss her. The touch of her lips on his raspy cheek affected him rather disconcertingly. She was very mysterious to him in that moment, —not like his familiar daughter, but like a woman strange, exquisite, and incomprehensible, and it seemed monstrous and barbaric that Captain Coggleshall should whisk away this delicate and sensitive creature into some withdrawn secrecy and call her his own. Fortunately the queer sensation lingered no more than a moment in Mr. Jack Hollins's soul. In another moment Mr. Jack Hollins was himself again.

He presented to the pair a small house in select Hill Street, together with two thousand pounds for furnishing, and he paid in advance the first half-yearly instalment of the promised five thousand a year. In short he behaved with an old-fashioned grandiosity, and his satisfaction in doing so was much enhanced by the certitude of his conviction that the Coggleshalls were as poor as church mice and that if he chose he could eat up the Coggleshalls and Coggleshall Haigh (their place), and all that was theirs, without having indigestion. The prospect of living alone in Carlos Place did not in the least affright him.

II

Still, he went away for four months, reaching Parà and then doing a further thousand miles or so up the Amazon. He wrote no letters except business letters, so that Samuels was the only person to be advised of

his return. On the morning after his arrival he had the idea of strolling round to Hill Street, to see how his daughter had been getting along with a husband who was captain in the First Lifeguards. The colour of the front-door of the Coggleshall house annoyed him very much. It was a brilliant uncompromising vermilion. As he had never wandered about Chelsea, this was the first vermilion front-door in his experience. Not the colour itself but the fantastic public silliness of the thing vexed him. He noticed moreoever that the blinds and curtains of the house were a challenge to the conventions of British domesticity. A parlourmaid, dressed like no other parlourmaid within his memory, opened to him.

"Mrs. Coggleshall in?" said he, and stepped forward in the firm fashion of a broker's man who must not stand on ceremony in order to effect an entrance. He had a faint hope that the maid might reply: "Her ladyship is at home." But he was disappointed; Sir Maurice had not expired during his absence, and Minnie had not yet come into a title.

He told the maid fiercely who he was, and she led him into a room which like the front-door aroused his angry contempt. The door of it was black, and the door-case pale blue. The walls were not papered but palely distempered. The scanty furniture was painted in strange tints, and there was not a bit of mahogany or oak anywhere. The fireplace was draped in slaty silk. The lower half of the walls was covered with paintings and drawings and prints, whose subjects were in his opinion either incomprehensible or idiotic or indecent, and most of which had the air of having been daubed by humorous children. He could better have withstood these tasteless jokes had they been respectably and stoutly framed in English gold; but very

few of them were framed at all. The cushions, which abounded, seemed to have been borrowed from a pantomime. On the mantelpiece was a whole row of unprecedented dolls. Disorder was everywhere.

Minnie came into the room, not hurrying, but moving rather more quickly than usual. There was a look on her face such as he had never seen there; she was Marmion's wife. All her physique had altered, and for the better. In fact she would have been a magnificent spectacle but for the huge ugly apron that she was wearing, which apron covered her from neck to ankle.

"Well, father," she greeted him tranquilly, as if she had talked with him last on the previous evening, "how are you?" She shook hands, did not kiss. "We were both up in the studio painting. Quaggy will be down in a minute."

"Quaggy?" demanded Mr. Jack Hollins. "Who's he?"

"It's what I call Marmion now. I made it up."

He had left this girl sane. He had given this girl the house and two thousand for furnishing it. Such furniture as he had descried could not have cost more than about fifteen shillings. He was also allowing this girl five thousand a year.

Then the husband appeared, in a brown velveteen coat and a necktie that might have been ripped off a cushion-cover. He had decidedly put on weight, but did not seem to be in very good condition. The perfection of his social manner, however, was unimpaired. Ignoring Mr. Jack Hollins's irritated taciturnity, he talked at ease of the Amazon and the Booth line of steamers and of similar matters suitable to the comprehension of a father-in-law. And as he talked, Minnie, with shining eyes, happy and absent-minded,

stroked his velveteen shoulders at intervals in adoration. Oh! He was decidedly at peace with his world, was Marmion.

"You must see the rest of the house, father," said Minnie.

"Well, if you want to know," said Mr. Jack Hollins, after the agitating tour of inspection (the double drawing-room had been turned into two studios), "well, if you want to know, I don't like it, and that's flat."

"No," observed Marmion, with a benignant placidity, "we feared it might hurt your finer susceptibilities."

Jackanapes! The fellow was laughing at his father-in-law! Mr. Hollins was furious, but he controlled himself. He declined to stay to lunch, partly because of his general resentment, and partly because he detested the dining-table, which was ridiculously narrow and painted in a most offensive orange tint. Marmion very courteously regretted Mr. Hollins's inability to lunch. He passed his elegant hand across his forehead, and Minnie, exclaiming that Quaggy suffered too much from neuralgia, started on the disquieting subject of his health.

Mr. Hollins had a lancinating qualm:

"If he dies before the old baronet, my daughter will never be her ladyship."

Then Minnie referred, apparently quite incidentally, to the fact that Quaggy had decided to resign his commission in the First Lifeguards, so that he might have more leisure for painting. This was precisely the straw that broke the back of Mr. Jack Hollins's temper. The veins on his neck became manifest. And as her father began to lay about him, Minnie was reminded of the terrible humiliations her mother had

suffered in the past. She blushed for her father, but she left the situation for her husband to handle. Mr. Hollins both ramped and raved. He would have his way. His son-in-law was largely dependent upon him, and his son-in-law should not resign his commission. He didn't mind his son-in-law playing at art, but he would absolutely not permit him to be a professional painter. No! Let him understand that once for all! Mr. Jack Hollins's daughter was not going to be the wife of a professional painter. If Marmion resigned his commission he would then no doubt relinquish physical exercise entirely, and in all probability would die and the title would lapse. A pretty thing!

"What does your father say to this senseless scheme?" demanded Mr. Hollins.

"Well, my father objects to it in much the same style as you do," answered Marmion blandly, and in his tone Mr. Hollins surmised an infuriating irony. . . . You never knew how to take the fellow.

"I should think he did object!" Mr. Hollins cried. "Anybody would who wasn't a damned fool!"

At these words Marmion walked slowly to the window and looked out.

"Anyhow," Mr. Hollins finished, "you let me hear from you to-morrow morning that you've changed your mind, or else—"

"Yes?" said Marmion, turning his head.

"Or else not another penny of my money will come into this house. You can bet your life on that. I've got my daughter's interests to think of."

"Mr. Hollins," said Marmion, looking out into the street again, "forgive me for saying so, but it occurs to me that you are presuming a little on your position as my wife's father in this house. And may I

add it's not your commission I'm going to resign; it's my own."

Mr. Hollins made the worst of his way out, and nobody accompanied him to the vermilion front-door.

III

His state of mind can only be described as one of exasperated fury. The reasons for the fury were lost in the fury itself. Mr. Jack Hollins had ceased to be rational. Samuels had immediate cause to learn his master's condition. The next morning no letter came either from Marmion or Minnie. Mr. Hollins had feared that there would be no letter, and yet he was amazed at the defiance. These two persons, who had absolutely no weapons, were nevertheless defying him. He could not understand it. The thing was scarcely conceivable. He had never been defied before. All the ruthlessness of the brother of the man who had defied nature herself and damned the consequences, came into play.

And Mr. Hollins had an original and brilliant idea. He called up Mr. Shelton Shelton, philanthropic giver of clinics, on the telephone. Mr. Shelton Shelton, being a very important person indeed, was not easy to get at, even on the telephone. But Mr. Hollins, perhaps by the help of the ruthlessness in his voice, got at him, and, explaining that he desired an interview about a philanthropic scheme of magnitude, obtained an appointment for the next day. The appointment was confirmed by a secretary's letter.

The next day, there being no sign of any sort from the house with the vermilion door, Mr. Hollins kept the appointment. He had to wait for nearly a quarter of an hour in the antechambers of Mr. Shelton

Shelton: which annoyed him considerably. Mr. Shelton Shelton received Mr. Jack Hollins, somewhat nonchalantly, in a magnificently furnished private office. He was a short, thin man, with a shiny red complexion, an oily insinuating voice, a short pointed white beard, a frock coat, and the habit of joining his hands at the tips of his fingers. Mr. Jack Hollins thought he resembled a revivalist preacher or a moneylender's tout much more than a renowned philanthropist; but he admitted at the first glance that Mr. Shelton Shelton must be an exceedingly clever and wary man. He was the least bit afraid lest the philanthropist might in some unimagined way get the better of him.

"Please do accept my apologies for keeping you waiting, my dear Mr. Hollins," began Mr. Shelton Shelton, his hand folding like a snake round the hand of Mr. Hollins. "I hope I needn't tell you that circumstances were too much for me. They often are, alas! Do sit down. I am delighted to meet a director of the Midlands Cooked Food Company, which has done so much to cater honestly for our impoverished middle-classes." And so on.

Mr. Hollins soon perceived that Mr. Shelton Shelton had learned a good deal about him. And after Mr. Hollins had mumbled something Mr. Shelton Shelton went on again:

"I feel sure you'll understand if I ask you at this first interview to state your case as briefly as possible. My day has been deranged. I have an appointment with the Countess of Alcar in a quarter of an hour, and another with the First Secretary of the American Embassy in an hour from now."

"I can state my case in five minutes, not fifteen, Mr. Shelton Shelton," said Mr. Jack Hollins firmly. "I'm like yourself, a rich man." Mr. Shelton Shelton nod-

ded approvingly. "I've got nothing to do with my money. No family, except one daughter who's married and settled. I've no vices, and few pleasures, and so I don't spend my money. I want to do something with it, something useful. I particularly don't want to leave it behind me."

"Ah! Very good! Very good! I wish there were more rich men of your kidney, Mr. Hollins. You need advice, and you've come to me?"

"Don't run along quite so fast!" said Mr. Hollins in his soul to Mr. Shelton Shelton; and aloud: "It occurred to me that a gentleman of your experience might be able and willing to give me a few tips. A nod's as good as a wink to me, and I wouldn't care to bother you. I can paddle my own canoe, but any advice from somebody like yourself would be appreciated."

"Pray don't apologise. Pray do *not* apologise. I am entirely at your service. I'm at the service of humanity. Everybody in England knows that. Unfortunately there is no lack of charitable objects which you could devote yourself to. No lack! Personally I do what I can, as possibly you may have heard. But it's so little. So little!"

At this point Mr. Hollins was startled to see tears in the eyes of Mr. Shelton Shelton. He thought at first that he must be mistaken, but when two drops rolled down the wrinkled red cheeks of Mr. Shelton Shelton he knew that he was not mistaken. The tears inspired Mr. Hollins with disgust. He feared and detested Mr. Shelton Shelton, and he would have departed, but for his resolve to pick Mr. Shelton Shelton's brain if possible. He wanted to avoid making a public fool of himself as a philanthropist, and would neglect no precaution to that end.

In such wise did these two determined benefactors hobnob together, without even a cigarette to help them —Mr. Shelton Shelton being a person of the most austere principles—for the welfare of the multitudinous bottom dog.

"Before we go any further," said Mr. Shelton Shelton, "can you furnish me with any estimate of the sum which you have in mind to employ on your proposed scheme? The choice of the scheme would obviously be influenced by the sum at disposal."

"Half a million, to commence with," answered Mr. Hollins succinctly.

Mr. Shelton Shelton glanced first at the clock and then at his watch.

"You must let me think it over, Mr. Hollins," said he. "You must let me think it over. The sum is not inconsiderable—and may I say how deeply I admire your simplicity and your public spirit? I will think it over and write you in a few days." He rang a bell. By some magic means Mr. Hollins found himself expeditiously in the street, and the novel idea presented itself to him that he was not the only strong and ruthless man on the face of the earth.

IV

Several days later, about six o'clock in the evening, Minnie called to see her father. Samuels, when he opened the door, raised his eyebrows and gave the slightest lift to his head—as if to indicate that the tyrant was above and in a highly explosive condition. No butler could have been at once more discreet and more informative. Samuels looked at his former mistress and fellow-slave and admired her greatly. Yes!

Marriage had improved her and made her a magnificent spectacle.

"Good afternoon, father," she said in the drawing-room. The old gentleman was seated by the fire.

"What do you want?"

"I just looked in to see how you were getting on."

"Has Marmion resigned his commission?"

"Yes." Minnie sat down, taking off her gloves, and Mr. Hollins jumped up.

"Oh! He has, has he?" Mr. Hollins cried, rancorously.

He gazed at his daughter, rabid and puzzled. The blow had fallen. He was definitely and uncompromisingly defied. There had been no parleying, no attempting of any sort to placate him. He examined, as well as he could in his extreme excitement, Minnie's placid and already half-maternal face. She and her husband were ready to sacrifice five thousand a year and perhaps also the relatively trifling sums received from Sir Maurice, in order to prove their independence of him. They were facing poverty, for themselves and their children, to that same end. It was incomprehensible. There must be something, there must be a good deal, of himself in that young woman who he realised had always baffled him even when he had humiliated and tortured her and forced her to obey him. In her own way she must be as ruthless as he was. . . . Ah! But he would be ruthless. He would be ruthless as never before. He simply could not bear being defied. The trouble was not now that Marmion had resigned his commission—it was that Marmion and Minnie had defied him.

"You wait!" he said, with terrible contained bitterness, and hastened to his bedroom, drawing a bunch of keys from his pocket as he went. His safe was in

the bedroom. He returned with his will. It was not a very long document. He opened it and beat it out with his open palm.

"You see that!" he said. "That meant fifty thousand a year to you. It will mean nothing in a minute because I am going to burn it. I'm going to give away most of what I have while I'm alive, and what's left 'll go to charity by a new will." He kept on slapping the page and crying: "Look at it! Read it! Look at it!"

Just then Samuels came in with a letter that had arrived by the six o'clock delivery. Recognising the envelope, Mr. Jack Hollins snatched at it, dropping the will.

The letter was, as he surmised, from Mr. Shelton Shelton. He was intending to show it to Minnie as a further proof of his plans. But it was as follows:

"My dear Mr. Hollins, Adverting to our very interesting and agreeable interview, I cannot tell you how profoundly I appreciate your desire to give me so large a sum as half a million pounds to help forward my philanthropic schemes. It is a mark of confidence such as even I have seldom received, and encourages me to continue energetically in my life's work. If you will call to-morrow at about four I will explain to you in some detail how I propose to employ your munificent donation, and perhaps at the same time you will indicate what arrangements you are making for the transfer of the necessary stocks or other securities. Believe me, my dear Mr. Hollins, very cordially yours, I. SHELTON SHELTON."

The recipient of the letter gasped, tried to speak and could not, stamped his feet violently, crunched the letter into a ball, and threw it into the fire and the envelope after it.

The sight of his speechless rage was appalling—so much so that Minnie lost her calm and exclaimed in protest:

"Father!"

She had never seen anything like it. The old man's face, violently twitching, seemed to puff up; the veins of his neck, overcharged with blood at terrific pressure, stood out like raised seams; his breathing was stertorous; his eyes rolled. The continued violent efforts to relieve his emotion by articulation racked his obese frame, producing such exhaustion that he fell at last into the easy-chair and his head sank to one side against the flap. Minnie knelt down to him and perceived that he had been drinking whiskey. She rang the bell, and then, as there was no immediate answer, ran out on to the landing.

"Samuels! Samuels! Father is taken ill. I think he's had an apoplectic stroke. Telephone for the doctor." Her voice seemed to resound through the house, and she heard responsive feet hurrying and noises from the basement.

When she returned to him Mr. Hollins's forehead had gone white, and his hands were blue. She tried to straighten the twisted right leg; it was as heavy as lead. He was unconscious, and he was paralysed. Half an hour later, and a few seconds after the doctor entered, Mr. Hollins died. The enormous impudence and vanity of the great philanthropist had killed him. Not for another hour did Marmion arrive. Mr. Hollins was then stretched on his bed decently and in order. The lights had been extinguished in the big drawing-room.

"Quaggy!" murmured Minnie, and burst into tears. There was no sobbing, and the tears passed like a brief summer shower; but Marmion had never seen her cry

before, and nobody in the house had seen her cry before. He held her gently. She was stricken with grief for the terrible old man, beaten as it were at the post of destiny. But for the chance coming of a letter at a certain moment, he might have laid waste her whole life. Yet the foolish creature, ordinarily so wise, could feel acutely the pathos of the dramatic defeat of Mr. Hollins's demoniacal ruthlessness. It was tragic that he could not win. She wondered what the burnt letter could have contained.

"All this is very dangerous for you, my dear," said her husband. "Come away!"

She controlled herself.

"What's that paper you've got?" she asked murmuringly.

"It's the will."

She turned in obedience from the bed, realising the wisdom of her husband's advice. The thought of the vast responsibility of great riches and of her future rôle as a mother solemnised her, and she leaned softly on Marmion. He closed the door on the poor remains of the formidable and ineffectual Juggernaut.

"Poor old chap!" muttered Marmion; for he could admire the heroic even in savagery; and he was one of those simple ones who remember that we are all heaven's creatures.

A PASSAGE TO BENARES

A Mystery Story

BY T. S. STRIBLING

FROM "CLUES OF THE CARIBBEES"

PROFESSOR POGGIOLI, philosopher, psychologist, and amateur criminologist, who went to Benares to investigate a certain Hindu custom, is one of the most fascinating characters in detective fiction.

A PASSAGE TO BENARES

IN PORT OF SPAIN, Trinidad, at half-past five in the morning, Mr. Henry Poggioli, the American psychologist, stirred uneasily, became conscious of a splitting headache, opened his eyes in bewilderment, and then slowly reconstructed his surroundings. He recognized the dome of the Hindu temple seen dimly above him; the jute rug on which he lay; the blur of the image of Krishna sitting cross-legged on the altar. The American had a dim impression that the figure had not sat thus on the altar all night long—a dream, no doubt; he had a faint memory of lurid nightmares. The psychologist allowed the thought to lose itself as he got up slowly from the sleeping rug which the cicerone had spread for him the preceding evening.

In the circular temple everything was still in deep shadow, but the gray light of dawn filled the arched entrance. The white man moved carefully to the door so as not to jar his aching head. A little distance from him he saw another sleeper, a coolie beggar stretched out on a rug, and he thought he saw still another farther away. As he passed out of the entrance the cool freshness of the tropical morning caressed his face like the cool fingers of a woman. Kiskadee birds were calling from palms and saman trees, and there was a wide sound of dripping dew. Not far from the temple a coolie woman stood on a seesaw with a great stone attached to the other end of the plank, and by stepping to and fro she swung the stone up and down and pounded some rice in a mortar.

Poggioli stood looking at her a moment, then felt in his pocket for the key to his friend Lowe's garden gate. He found it and moved off up Tragarette Road to where the squalid East Indian village gave way to the high garden walls and ornamental shrubbery of the English suburb of Port of Spain. He walked on more briskly as the fresh air eased his head, and presently he stopped and unlocked a gate in one of the bordering walls. He began to smile as he let himself in; his good humor increased as he walked across a green lawn to a stone cottage which had a lower window still standing open. This was his own room. He reached up to the sill and drew himself inside, which gave his head one last pang. He shook this away, however, and began undressing for his morning shower.

Mr. Poggioli was rather pleased with his exploit, although he had not forwarded the experiment which had induced him to sleep in the temple. It had come about in this way: On the foregoing evening the American and his host in Port of Spain, a Mr. Lowe, a bank clerk, had watched a Hindu wedding procession enter the same temple in which Poggioli had just spent the night. They had watched the dark-skinned white-robed musicians smiting their drums and skirling their pipes with bouffant cheeks. Behind them marched a procession of coolies. The bride was a little cream-colored girl who wore a breastplate of linked gold coins over her childish bosom, while anklets and bracelets almost covered her arms and legs. The groom, a tall, dark coolie, was the only man in the procession who wore European clothes, and he, oddly enough, was attired in a full evening dress suit. At the incongruous sight Poggioli burst out laughing, but Lowe touched his arm and said in an undertone:

"Don't take offense, old man, but if you didn't laugh it might help me somewhat."

Poggioli straightened his face.

"Certainly, but how's that?"

"The groom, Boodman Lal, owns one of the best curio shops in town and carries an account at my bank. That fifth man in the procession, the skeleton wearing the yellow *kapra*, is old Hira Dass. He is worth something near a million in pounds sterling."

The psychologist became sober enough, out of his American respect for money.

"Hira Dass," went on Lowe, "built this temple and rest house. He gives rice and tea to any traveler who comes in for the night. It's an Indian custom to help mendicant pilgrims to the different shrines. A rich Indian will build a temple and a rest house just as your American millionaires erect libraries."

The American nodded again, watching now the old man with the length of yellow silk wrapped around him. And just at this point Poggioli received the very queer impression which led to his night's adventure.

When the wedding procession entered the temple the harsh music stopped abruptly. Then, as the line of robed coolies disappeared into the dark interior the psychologist had a strange feeling that the procession had been swallowed up and had ceased to exist. The bizarre red-and-gold building stood in the glare of sunshine, a solid reality, while its devotees had been dissipated into nothingness.

So peculiar, so startling was the impression, that Poggioli blinked and wondered how he ever came by it. The temple had somehow suggested the Hindu theory of Nirvana. Was it possible that the Hindu architect had caught some association of ideas between the doctrine of oblitera-

tion and these curves and planes and colors glowing before him? Had he done it by contrast or simile? The fact that Poggioli was a psychologist made the problem all the more intriguing to him—the psychologic influence of architecture. There must be some rationale behind it. An idea how he might pursue this problem came into his head. He turned to his friend and exclaimed:

"Lowe, how about staying all night in old Hira Dass's temple?"

"Doing what?" with a stare of amazement.

"Staying a night in the temple. I had an impression just then, a——"

"Why, my dear fellow!" ejaculate Lowe, "no white man ever stayed all night in a coolie temple. It simply isn't done!"

The American argued his case a moment:

"You and I had a wonderful night aboard the *Trevemore* when we became acquainted."

"That was a matter of necessity," said the bank clerk. "There were no first-class cabin accommodations left on the *Trevemore*, so we had to make the voyage on deck."

Here the psychologist gave up his bid for companionship. Late that night he slipped out of Lowe's cottage, walked back to the grotesque temple, was given a cup of tea, a plate of rice, and a sleeping rug. The only further impression the investigator obtained was a series of fantastic and highly colored dreams, of which he could not recall a detail. Then he waked with a miserable headache and came home.

Mr. Poggioli finished his dressing and in a few minutes the breakfast bell rang. He went to the dining room to find the bank clerk unfolding the damp pages of the

Port of Spain *Inquirer*. This was a typical English sheet using small, solidly set columns without flaming headlines. Poggioli glanced at it and wondered mildly if nothing worth featuring ever happened in Trinidad.

Ram Jon, Lowe's Hindu servant, slipped in and out of the breakfast room with peeled oranges, tea, toast, and a custard fruit flanked by a half lemon to squeeze over it.

"Pound sterling advanced a point," droned Lowe from his paper.

"It'll reach par," said the American, smiling faintly and wondering what Lowe would say if he knew of his escapade.

"Our new governor general will arrive in Trinidad on the twelfth."

"Surely that deserved a headline," said the psychologist.

"Don't try to debauch me with your American yellow journalism," smiled the bank clerk.

"Go your own way if you prefer doing research work every morning for breakfast."

The bank clerk laughed again at this, continued his perusal, then said:

"Hello, another coolie kills his wife. Tell me, Poggioli, as a psychologist, why do coolies kill their wives?"

"For various reasons, I fancy, or perhaps this one didn't kill her at all. Surely now and then some other person——"

"Positively no! It's always the husband, and instead of having various reasons, they have none at all. They say their heads are hot, and so to cool their own they cut off their wives'!"

The psychologist was amused in a dull sort of way.

"Lowe, you Englishmen are a nation with fixed ideas.

You genuinely believe that every coolie woman who is murdered is killed by her husband without any motive whatever."

"Sure, that's right," nodded Lowe, looking up from his paper.

"That simply shows me you English have no actual sympathy with your subordinate races. And that may be the reason your empire is great. Your aloofness, your unsympathy—by becoming automatic you become absolutely dependable. The idea, that every coolie woman is murdered by her husband without a motive!"

"That's correct," repeated Lowe with English imperturbability.

The conversation was interrupted by a ring at the garden-gate bell. A few moments later the two men saw through the shadow Ram Jon slithering across the grass with his greasy black hair shining in the morning sunlight. Lowe watched his servant with distaste.

"Something about these Hindus I don't like," he observed.

Poggioli smiled.

"Another evidence of your racial unsympathy."

"Now look here," defended Lowe, "nobody could like them. The way they walk makes me think of snakes gliding about on their tails."

Poggioli sat smiling and watched Ram Jon unlock the wall door, open it a few inches, parley a moment, and receive a letter. Then he came back with his limber, gliding gait.

Lowe received the note through the open window, broke the envelope, and fished out two notes instead of one. The clerk looked at the inclosures and began to read with a growing bewilderment in his face.

"What is it?" asked Poggioli at last.

"This is from Hira Dass to Jeffries, the vice-president of our bank. He says his nephew Boodman Lal has been arrested and he wants Jeffries to help get him out."

"What's he arrested for?"

"Er—for murdering his wife," said Lowe with a long face.

Poggioli stared.

"Wasn't he the man we saw in the procession yesterday?"

"Damn it, yes!" cried Lowe in sudden disturbance, "and he's a sensible fellow, too, one of our best patrons." He sat staring at the American over the letter, and then suddenly recalling a point, drove it home English fashion.

"That proves my contention, Poggioli—a groom of only six or eight hours' standing killing his wife. They simply commit uxoricide without any reason at all, the damned irrational rotters!"

"What's the other letter?" probed the American, leaning across the table.

"It's from Jeffries. He says he wants me to take this case and get the best talent in Trinidad to clear Mr. Hira Dass's house and consult with him." The clerk replaced the letters in the envelope. "Say, you've had some experience in this sort of thing. Won't you come with me?"

"Glad to."

The two men arose promptly from the table, got their hats, and went out into Tragarette Road once more. As they stood in the increasing heat waiting for a car, it occurred to Poggioli that the details of the murder ought to be in the morning's paper. He took the *Inquirer* from his friend and began a search through its closely printed col-

umns. Presently he found a paragraph without any heading at all:

Boodman Lal, nephew of Mr. Hira Dass, was arrested early this morning at his home in Peru, the East Indian suburb, for the alleged murder of his wife, whom he married yesterday at the Hindu temple in Peru. The body was found at six o'clock this morning in the temple. The attendant gave the alarm. Mrs. Boodman Lal's head was severed completely from her body and she lay in front of the Buddhist altar in her bridal dress. All of her jewelry was gone. Five coolie beggars who were asleep in the temple when the body was discovered were arrested. They claimed to know nothing of the crime, but a search of their persons revealed that each beggar had a piece of the young bride's jewelry and a coin from her necklace.

Mr. Boodman Lal and his wife were seen to enter the temple at about eleven o'clock last night for the Krishnian rite of purification. Mr. Boodman, who is a prominent curio dealer in this city, declines to say anything further than that he thought his wife had gone back to her mother's home for the night after her prayers in the temple. The young bride, formerly a Miss Maila Ran, was thirteen years old. Mr. Boodman is the nephew of Mr. Hira Dass, one of the wealthiest men in Trinidad.

The paragraph following this contained a notice of a tea given at Queen's Park Hotel by Lady Henley-Hoads, and the names of her guests.

The psychologist spent a painful moment pondering the kind of editor who would run a millionaire murder mystery, without any caption whatever, in between a legal notice and a society note. Then he turned his attention to the grewsome and mysterious details the paragraph contained.

"Lowe, what do you make out of those beggars, each with a coin and a piece of jewelry?"

"Simple enough. The rotters laid in wait in the temple

till the husband went out and left his wife, then they murdered her and divided the spoil."

"But that child had enough bangles to give a dozen to each man."

"Ye-es, that's a fact," admitted Lowe.

"And why should they continue sleeping in the temple?"

"Why shouldn't they? They knew they would be suspected, and they couldn't get off the island without capture, so they thought they might as well lie back down and go to sleep."

Here the street car approached and Mr. Poggioli nodded, apparently in agreement.

"Yes, I am satisfied that is how it occurred."

"You mean the beggars killed her?"

"No, I fancy the actual murderer took the girl's jewelry and went about the temple thrusting a bangle and a coin in the pockets of each of the sleeping beggars to lay a false scent."

"Aw, come now!" cried the bank clerk, "that's laying it on a bit too thick, Poggioli!"

"My dear fellow, that's the only possible explanation for the coins in the beggars' pockets."

By this time the men were on the tramcar and were clattering off down Tragarette Road. As they dashed along toward the Hindu village Poggioli remembered suddenly that he had walked this same distance the preceding night and had slept in this same temple. A certain sharp impulse caused the American to run a hand swiftly into his own pockets. In one side he felt the keys of his trunk and of Lowe's cottage; in the other he touched several coins and a round hard ring. With a little thrill he drew these to the edge of his pocket and took a covert glance at them. One showed the curve of a gold bangle; the other the face of an

old English gold coin which evidently had been soldered to something.

With a little sinking sensation Poggioli eased them back into his pocket and stared ahead at the coolie village which they were approaching. He moistened his lips and thought what he would better do. The only notion that came into his head was to pack his trunk and take passage on the first steamer out of Trinidad, no matter to what port it was bound.

In his flurry of uneasiness the psychologist was tempted to drop the gold pieces then and there, but as the street car rattled into Peru he reflected that no other person in Trinidad knew that he had these things, except indeed the person who slipped them into his pocket, but that person was not likely to mention the matter. Then, too, it was such an odd occurrence, so piquing to his analytic instinct, that he decided he would go on with the inquiry.

Two minutes later Lowe rang down the motorman and the two companions got off in the Hindu settlement. By this time the street was full of coolies, greasy men and women gliding about with bundles on their heads or coiled down in the sunshine in pairs where they took turns in examining each other's head for vermin. Lowe glanced about, oriented himself, then started walking briskly past the temple, when Poggioli stopped him and asked him where he was going.

"To report to old Hira Dass, according to my instructions from Jeffries," said the Englishman.

"Suppose we stop in the temple a moment. We ought not to go to the old fellow without at least a working knowledge of the scene of the murder."

The clerk slowed up uncertainly, but at that moment

they glanced through the temple door and saw five coolies sitting inside. A policeman at the entrance was evidently guarding these men as prisoners. Lowe approached the guard, made his mission known, and a little later he and his guest were admitted into the temple.

The coolie prisoners were as repulsive as are all of their kind. Four were as thin as cadavers, the fifth one greasily fat. All five wore cheesecloth around their bodies, which left them as exposed as if they had worn nothing at all. One of the emaciated men held his mouth open all the time with an expression of suffering caused by a chronic lack of food. The five squatted on their rugs and looked at the white men with their beadlike eyes. The fat one said in a low tone to his companions:

"The sahib."

This whispered ejaculation disquieted Poggioli somewhat, and he reflected again that it would have been discretion to withdraw from the murder of little Maila Ran as quietly as possible. Still he could explain his presence in the temple simply enough. And besides, the veiled face of the mystery seduced him. He stood studying the five beggars: the greasy one, the lean ones, the one with the suffering face.

"Boys," he said to the group, for all coolies are boys, "did any of you hear any noises in this temple last night?"

"Much sleep, sahib, no noise. Police-y-man punch us 'wake this morning make sit still here."

"What's your name?" asked the American of the loquacious fat mendicant.

"Chuder Chand, sahib."

"When did you go to sleep last night?"

"When I ate rice and tea, sahib."

"Do you remember seeing Boodman Lal and his wife enter this building last night?"

Here their evidence became divided. The fat man remembered; two of the cadavers remembered only the wife, one only Boodman Lal, and one nothing at all.

Poggioli confined himself to the fat man.

"Did you see them go out?"

All five shook their heads.

"You were all asleep then?"

A general nodding.

"Did you have any impressions during your sleep, any disturbance, any half rousing, any noises?"

The horror-struck man said in a ghastly tone:

"I dream bad dream, sahib. When police-y-man punch me awake this morning I think my dream is come to me."

"And me, sahib."

"Me, sahib."

"Me."

"Did you all have bad dreams?"

A general nodding.

"What did you dream, Chuder Chand?" inquired the psychologist with a certain growth of interest.

"Dream me a big fat pig, but still I starved, sahib."

"And you?" at a lean man.

"That I be mashed under a great bowl of rice, sahib, but hungry."

"And you?" asked Poggioli of the horror-struck coolie.

The coolie wet his dry lips and whispered in his ghastly tones:

"Sahib, I dreamed I was Siva, and I held the world in my hands and bit it and it tasted bitter, like the rind of a mammy apple. And I said to Vishnu, 'Let me be a dog in the streets, rather than taste the bitterness of this world,'

and then the policeman punched me, sahib, and asked if I had murdered Maila Ran."

The psychologist stood staring at the sunken temples and withered chaps of the beggar, amazed at the enormous vision of godhood which had visited the old mendicant's head. No doubt this grandiloquent dream was a sort of compensation for the starved and wretched existence the beggar led.

Here the bank clerk intervened to say that they would better go on around to old Hira Dass's house according to instructions.

Poggioli turned and followed his friend out of the temple.

"Lowe, I think we can now entirely discard the theory that the beggars murdered the girl."

"On what grounds?" asked the clerk in surprise. "They told you nothing but their dreams."

"That is the reason. All five had wild, fantastic dreams. That suggests they were given some sort of opiate in their rice or tea last night. It is very improbable that five ignorant coolies would have wit enough to concoct such a piece of evidence as that."

"That's a fact," admitted the Englishman, a trifle surprised, "but I don't believe a Trinidad court would admit such evidence."

"We are not looking for legal evidence; we are after some indication of the real criminal."

By this time the two men were walking down a hot, malodorous alley which emptied into the square a little east of the temple. Lowe jerked a bell-pull in a high adobe wall, and Poggioli was surprised that this could be the home of a millionaire Hindu. Presently the shutter opened and

Mr. Hira Dass himself stood in the opening. The old Hindu was still draped in yellow silk which revealed his emaciated form almost as completely as if he had been naked. But his face was alert with hooked nose and brilliant black eyes, and his wrinkles did not so much suggest great age as they did shrewdness and acumen.

The old coolie immediately led his callers into an open court surrounded by marble columns with a fountain in its center and white doves fluttering up to the frieze or floating back down again.

The Hindu began talking immediately of the murder and his anxiety to clear his unhappy nephew. The old man's English was very good, no doubt owing to the business association of his latter years.

"A most mysterious murder," he deplored, shaking his head, "and the life of my poor nephew will depend upon your exertions, gentlemen. What do you think of those beggars that were found in the temple with the bangles and coins?"

Mr. Hira Dass seated his guests on a white marble bench, and now walked nervously in front of them, like some fantastic old scarecrow draped in yellow silk.

"I am afraid my judgment of the beggars will disappoint you, Mr. Hira Dass," answered Poggioli. "My theory is they are innocent of the crime."

"Why do you say that?" queried Hira Dass, looking sharply at the American.

The psychologist explained his deduction from their dreams.

"You are not English, sir," exclaimed the old man. "No Englishman would have thought of that."

"No, I'm half Italian and half American."

The old Indian nodded.

"Your Latin blood has subtlety, Mr. Poggioli, but you base your proof on the mechanical cause of the dreams, not upon the dreams themselves."

The psychologist looked at the old man's cunning face and gnomelike figure and smiled.

"I could hardly use the dreams themselves, although they were fantastic enough."

"Oh, you did inquire into the actual dreams?"

"Yes, by the way of professional interest."

"What is your profession? Aren't you a detective?"

"No, I'm a psychologist."

Old Hira Dass paused in his rickety walking up and down the marble pavement to stare at the American and then burst into the most wrinkled cachinnation Poggioli had ever seen.

"A psychologist, and inquired into a suspected criminal's dreams out of mere curiosity!" the old gnome cackled again, then became serious. He held up a thin finger at the American. "I must not laugh. Your oversoul, your *atman*, is at least groping after knowledge as the blindworm gropes. But enough of that, Mr. Poggioli. Our problem is to find the criminal who committed this crime and restore my nephew Boodman Lal to liberty. You can imagine what a blow this is to me. I arranged this marriage for my nephew."

The American looked at the old man with new ground for deduction.

"You did—arranged a marriage for a nephew who is in the thirties?"

"Yes, I wanted him to avoid the pitfalls into which I fell," replied old Hira Dass seriously. "He was unmarried, and had already begun to add dollars to dollars. I did the same thing, Mr. Poggioli, and now look at me—an

empty old man in a foreign land. What good is this marble court where men of my own kind cannot come and sit with me, and when I have no grandchildren to feed the doves? No, I have piled up dollars and pounds. I have eaten the world, Mr. Poggioli, and found it bitter; now here I am, an outcast."

There was a passion in this outburst which moved the American, and at the same time the old Hindu's phraseology was sharply reminiscent of the dreams told him by the beggars in the temple. The psychologist noted the point hurriedly and curiously in the flow of the conversation, and at the same moment some other part of his brain was inquiring tritely:

"Then why don't you go back to India, Mr. Hira Dass?"

"With this worn-out body," the old Hindu made a contemptuous gesture toward himself, "and with this face, wrinkled with pence! Why, Mr. Poggioli, my mind is half English. If I should return to Benares I would walk about thinking what the temples cost, what was the value of the stones set in the eyes of Krishna's image. That is why we Hindus lose our caste if we travel abroad and settle in a foreign land, because we do indeed lose caste. We become neither Hindus nor English. Our minds are divided, so if I would ever be one with my own people again, Mr. Poggioli, I must leave this Western mind and body here in Trinidad."

Old Hira Dass's speech brought to the American that fleeting credulity in transmigration of the soul which an ardent believer always inspires. The old Hindu made the theory of palingenesis appear almost matter-of-fact. A man died here and reappeared as a babe in India. There was nothing so unbelievable in that. A man's basic energy,

which has loved, hated, aspired, and grieved here, must go somewhere, while matter itself was a mere dance of atoms. Which was the most permanent, Hira Dass's passion or his marble court? Both were mere forms of force. The psychologist drew himself out of his reverie.

"That is very interesting, or I should say moving, Hira Dass. You have strange griefs. But we were discussing your nephew, Boodman Lal. I think I have a theory which may liberate him."

"And what is that?"

"As I have explained to you, I believe the beggars in the temple were given a sleeping potion. I suspect the temple attendant doped the rice and later murdered your nephew's wife."

The millionaire became thoughtful.

"That is good Gooka. I employ him. He is a miserably poor man, Mr. Poggioli, so I cannot believe he committed this murder."

"Pardon me, but I don't follow your reasoning. If he is poor he would have a strong motive for the robbery."

"That's true, but a very poor man would never have dropped the ten pieces of gold into the pockets of the beggars to lay a false scent. The man who did this deed must have been a well-to-do person accustomed to using money to forward his purposes. Therefore, in searching for the criminal I would look for a moneyed man."

"But, Mr. Hira Dass," protested the psychologist, "that swings suspicion back to your nephew."

"My nephew!" cried the old man, growing excited again. "What motive would my nephew have to slay his bride of a few hours!"

"But what motive," retorted Poggioli with academic

curtness, "would a well-to-do man have to murder a child? And what chance would he have to place an opiate in the rice?"

The old Hindu lifted a finger and came closer.

"I'll tell you my suspicions," he said in a lowered voice, "and you can work out the details."

"Yes, what are they?" asked Poggioli, becoming attentive again.

"I went down to the temple this morning to have the body of my poor murdered niece brought here to my villa for burial. I talked to the five beggars and they told me that there was a sixth sleeper in the temple last night." The old coolie shook his finger, lifted his eyebrows, and assumed a very gnomish appearance indeed.

A certain trickle of dismay went through the American. He tried to keep from moistening his lips and perhaps did, but all he could think to do was to lift his eyebrows and say:

"Was there, indeed?"

"Yes—and a white man!"

Lowe, the bank clerk, who had been sitting silent through all this, interrupted.

"Surely not, Mr. Hira Dass, not a white man!"

"All five of the coolies and my man Gooka told me it was true," reiterated the old man, "and I have always found Gooka a truthful man. And besides, such a man would fill the rôle of assailant exactly. He would be well-to-do, accustomed to using money to forward his purposes."

The psychologist made a sort of mental lunge to refute this rapid array of evidence old Hira Dass was piling up against him.

"But, Mr. Hira Dass, decapitation is not an American mode of murder!"

"American!"

"I—I was speaking generally," stammered the psychologist, "I mean a white man's method of murder."

"That is indicative in itself," returned the Hindu promptly. "I meant to call your attention to that point. It shows the white man was a highly educated man, who had studied the mental habit of other peoples than his own, so he was enabled to give the crime an extraordinary resemblance to a Hindu crime. I would suggest, gentlemen, that you begin your search for an intellectual white man."

"What motive could such a man have?" cried the American.

"Robbery, possibly, or if he were a very intellectual man indeed he might have murdered the poor child by way of experiment. I read not long ago in an American paper of two youths who committed such a crime."

"A murder for experiment!" cried Lowe, aghast.

"Yes, to record the psychological reaction."

Poggioli suddenly got to his feet.

"I can't agree with such a theory as that, Mr. Hira Dass," he said in a shaken voice.

"No, it's too far-fetched," declared the clerk at once.

"However, it is worth while investigating," persisted the Hindu.

"Yes, yes," agreed the American, evidently about to depart, "but I shall begin my investigations, gentlemen, with the man Gooka."

"As you will," agreed Hira Dass, "and in your investigations, gentlemen, hire any assistants you need, draw on me for any amount. I want my nephew exonerated, and above all things I want the real criminal apprehended and brought to the gallows."

Lowe nodded.

"We'll do our best, sir," he answered in his thoroughgoing English manner.

The old man followed his guests to the gate and bowed them out into the malodorous alleyway again.

As the two friends set off through the hot sunshine once more the bank clerk laughed.

"A white man in that temple! That sounds like pure fiction to me to shield Boodman Lal. You know these coolies hang together like thieves."

He walked on a little way pondering, then added, "Jolly good thing we didn't decide to sleep in the temple last night, isn't it, Poggioli?"

A sickish feeling went over the American. For a moment he was tempted to tell his host frankly what he had done and ask his advice in the matter, but finally he said:

"In my opinion the actual criminal is Boodman Lal."

Lowe glanced around sidewise at his guest and nodded faintly.

"Same here. I thought it ever since I first saw the account in the *Inquirer*. Somehow these coolies will chop their wives to pieces for no reason at all."

"I know a very good reason in this instance," retorted the American warmly, taking out his uneasiness in this manner. "It's these damned child marriages! When a man marries some child he doesn't care a tuppence for—— What do you know about Boodman Lal, anyway?"

"All there is to know. He was born here and has always been a figure here in Port of Spain because of his rich uncle."

"Lived here all his life?"

"Except when he was in Oxford for six years."

"Oh, he's an Oxford man!"

"Yes."

"There you are, there's the trouble."

"What do you mean?"

"No doubt he fell in love with some English girl. But when his wealthy uncle, Hira Dass, chose a Hindu child for his wife, Boodman could not refuse the marriage. No man is going to quarrel with a million-pound legacy, but he chose this ghastly method of getting rid of the child."

"I venture you are right," declared the bank clerk. "I felt sure Boodman Lal had killed the girl."

"Likely as not he was engaged to some English girl and was waiting for his uncle's death to make him wealthy."

"Quite possible, in fact probable."

Here a cab came angling across the square toward the two men as they stood in front of the grotesque temple. The Negro driver waved his whip interrogatively. The clerk beckoned him in. The cab drew up at the curb. Lowe climbed in but Poggioli remained on the pavement.

"Aren't you coming?"

"You know, Lowe," said Poggioli seriously, "I don't feel that I can conscientiously continue this investigation, trying to clear a person whom I have every reason to believe guilty."

The bank clerk was disturbed.

"But, man, don't leave me like this! At least come on to the police headquarters and explain your theory about the temple keeper, Gooka, and the rice. That seems to hang together pretty well. It is possible Boodman Lal didn't do this thing after all. We owe it to him to do all we can."

As Poggioli still hung back on the curb, Lowe asked: "What do you want to do?"

"Well, I—er—thought I would go back to the cottage and pack my things."

The bank clerk was amazed.

"Pack your things—your boat doesn't sail until Friday!"

"Yes, I know, but there is a daily service to Curaçao. It struck me to go——"

"Aw, come!" cried Lowe in hospitable astonishment, "you can't run off like that, just when I've stirred up an interesting murder mystery for you to unravel. You ought to appreciate my efforts as a host more than that."

"Well, I do," hesitated Poggioli seriously. At that moment his excess of caution took one of those odd, instantaneous shifts that come so unaccountably to men, and he thought to himself, "Well, damn it, this is an interesting situation. It's a shame to leave it, and nothing will happen to me."

So he swung into the cab with decision and ordered briskly: "All right, to the police station, Sambo!"

"Sounds more like it," declared the clerk, as the cab horses set out at a brisk trot through the sunshine.

Mr. Lowe, the bank clerk, was not without a certain flair for making the most of a house guest, and when he reached the police station he introduced his companion to the chief of police as "Mr. Poggioli a professor in an American university and a research student in criminal psychology."

The chief of police, a Mr. Vickers, was a short, thick man with a tropic-browned face and eyes habitually squinted against the sun. He seemed not greatly impressed with the titles Lowe gave his friend but merely remarked that if Mr. Poggioli was hunting crimes, Trinidad was a good place to find them.

The bank clerk proceeded with a certain importance in his manner.

"I have asked his counsel in the Boodman Lal murder

case. He has developed a theory, Mr. Vickers, as to who is the actual murderer of Mrs. Boodman Lal."

"So have I," replied Vickers with a dry smile.

"Of course you think Boodman Lal did it," said Lowe in a more commonplace manner.

Vickers did not answer this but continued looking at the two taller men in a listening attitude which caused Lowe to go on.

"Now in this matter, Mr. Vickers, I want to be perfectly frank with you. I'll admit we are in this case in the employ of Mr. Hira Dass, and are making an effort to clear Boodman Lal. We felt confident you would use the well-known skill of the police department of Port of Spain to work out a theory to clear Boodman Lal just as readily as you would to convict him."

"Our department usually devotes its time to conviction and not to clearing criminals."

"Yes, I know that, but if our theory will point out the actual murderer——"

"What is your theory?" inquired Vickers without enthusiasm.

The bank clerk began explaining the dream of the five beggars and the probability that they had been given sleeping potions.

The short man smiled faintly.

"So Mr. Poggioli's theory is based on the dreams of these men?"

Poggioli had a pedagogue's brevity of temper when his theories were questions.

"It would be a remarkable coincidence, Mr. Vickers, if five men had lurid dreams simultaneously without some physical cause. It suggests strongly that their tea or rice was doped."

As Vickers continued looking at Poggioli the American continued with less acerbity:

"I should say that Gooka, the temple keeper, either doped the rice himself or he knows who did it."

"Possibly he does."

"My idea is that you send a man for the ricepot and teapot, have their contents analyzed, find out what soporific was used, then have your men search the sales records of the drug stores in the city to see who has lately bought such a drug."

Mr. Vickers grunted a noncommittal uh-huh, and then began in the livelier tones of a man who meets a stranger socially:

"How do you like Trinidad, Mr. Poggioli?"

"Remarkably luxuriant country—oranges and grapefruit growing wild."

"You've just arrived?"

"Yes."

"In what university do you teach?"

"Ohio State."

Mr. Vickers's eyes took on a humorous twinkle.

"A chair of criminal psychology in an ordinary state university—is that the result of your American prohibition laws, Professor?"

Poggioli smiled at this thrust.

"Mr. Lowe misstated my work a little. I am not a professor, I am simply a docent. And I have not specialized on criminal psychology. I quiz on general psychology."

"You are not teaching now?"

"No; this is my sabbatical year."

Mr. Vickers glanced up and down the American.

"You look young to have taught in a university six years."

There was something not altogether agreeable in this observation, but the officer rectified it a moment later by saying, "But you Americans start young—land of specialists. Now you, Mr. Poggioli—I suppose you are wrapped up heart and soul in your psychology?"

"I am," agreed the American positively.

"Do anything in the world to advance yourself in the science?"

"I rather think so," asserted Poggioli, with his enthusiasm mounting in his voice.

"Especially keen on original research work——?"

Lowe interrupted, laughing.

"That's what he is, Chief. Do you know what he asked me to do yesterday afternoon?"

"No, what?"

The American turned abruptly on his friend.

"Now, Lowe, don't let's burden Mr. Vickers with household anecdotes."

"But I am really curious," declared the police chief. "Just what did Professor Poggioli ask you to do yesterday afternoon, Mr. Lowe?"

The bank clerk looked from one to the other, hardly knowing whether to go on or not. Mr. Vickers was smiling; Poggioli was very serious as he prohibited anecdotes about himself. The bank clerk thought: "This is real modesty." He said aloud: "It was just a little psychological experiment he wanted to do."

"Did he do it?" smiled the chief.

"Oh, no, I wouldn't hear to it."

"As unconventional as that!" cried Mr. Vickers, lifting sandy brows.

"It was really nothing," said Lowe, looking at his guest's rigid face and then at the police captain.

Suddenly Mr. Vickers dropped his quizzical attitude.

"I think I could guess your anecdote if I tried, Lowe. About a half hour ago I received a telephone message from my man stationed at the Hindu temple to keep a lookout for you and Mr. Poggioli."

The American felt a tautening of his muscles at this frontal attack. He had suspected something of the sort from the policeman's manner. The bank clerk stared at the officer in amazement.

"What was your bobby telephoning about us for?"

"Because one of the coolies under arrest told him that Mr. Poggioli slept in the temple last night."

"My word, that's not true!" cried the bank clerk. "That is exactly what he did not do. He suggested it to me but I said No. You remember, Poggioli——"

Mr. Lowe turned for corroboration, but the look on his friend's face amazed him.

"You didn't do it, did you, Poggioli?" he gasped.

"You see he did," said Vickers dryly.

"But, Poggioli—in God's name——"

The American braced himself for an attempt to explain. He lifted his hand with a certain pedagogic mannerism.

"Gentlemen, I—I had a perfectly valid, an important reason for sleeping in the temple last night."

"I told you," nodded Vickers.

"In coolie town, in a coolie temple!" ejaculated Lowe.

"Gentlemen, I—can only ask your—your sympathetic attention to what I am about to say."

"Go on," said Vickers.

"You remember, Lowe, you and I were down there watching a wedding procession. Well, just as the music stopped and the line of coolies entered the building, suddenly it seemed to me as if—as if—they had——" Pog-

gioli swallowed at nothing and then added the odd word, "vanished."

Vickers looked at him.

"Naturally, they had gone into the building."

"I don't mean that. I'm afraid you won't understand what I do mean—that the whole procession had ceased to exist, melted into nothingness."

Even Mr. Vickers blinked. Then he drew out a memorandum book and stolidly made a note.

"Is that all?"

"No, then I began speculating on what had given me such a strange impression. You see that is really the idea on which the Hindus base their notion of heaven—oblivion, nothingness."

"Yes, I've heard that before."

"Well, our medieval Gothic architecture was a conception of our Western heaven; and I thought perhaps the Indian architecture had somehow caught the motif of the Indian religion; you know, suggested Nirvana. That was what amazed and intrigued me. That was why I wanted to sleep in the place. I wanted to see if I could further my shred of impression. Does this make any sense to you, Mr. Vickers?"

"I dare say it will, sir, to the criminal judge," opined the police chief cheerfully.

The psychologist felt a sinking of heart.

Mr. Vickers proceeded in the same matter-of-fact tone: "But no matter why you went in, what you did afterward is what counts. Here in Trinidad nobody is allowed to go around chopping off heads to see how it feels."

Poggioli looked at the officer with a ghastly sensation in his midriff.

"You don't think I did such a horrible thing as an experiment?"

Mr. Vickers drew out the makings of a cigarette.

"You Americans, especially you intellectual Americans, do some pretty stiff things, Mr. Poggioli. I was reading about two young intellectuals——"

"Good Lord!" quivered the psychologist with this particular reference beginning to grate on his nerves.

"These fellows I read about also tried to turn an honest penny by their murder—I don't suppose you happened to notice yesterday that the little girl, Maila Ran, was almost covered over with gold bangles and coins?"

"Of course I noticed it!" cried the psychologist, growing white, "but I had nothing whatever to do with the child. Your insinuations are brutal and repulsive. I did sleep in the temple——"

"By the way," interrupted Vickers suddenly, "you say you slept on a rug just as the other coolies did?"

"Yes, I did."

"You didn't wake up either?"

"No."

"Then did the murderer of the child happen to put a coin and a bangle in your pockets, just as he did the other sleepers in the temple?"

"That's exactly what he did!" cried Poggioli, with the first ray of hope breaking upon him. "When I found them in my pocket on the tram this morning I came pretty near throwing them away, but fortunately I didn't. Here they are."

And gladly enough now he drew the trinkets out and showed them to the chief of police.

Mr. Vickers looked at the gold pieces, then at the psychologist.

"You don't happen to have any more, do you?"

The American said No, but it was with a certain thrill of anxiety that he began turning out his other pockets. If the mysterious criminal had placed more than two gold pieces in his pockets he would be in a very difficult position. However, the remainder of his belongings were quite legitimate.

"Well, that's something," admitted Vickers slowly. "Of course, you might have expected just such a questioning as this and provided yourself with these two pieces of gold, but I doubt it. Somehow, I don't believe you are a bright enough man to think of such a thing." He paused, pondering, and finally said, "I suppose you have no objection to my sending a man to search your baggage in Mr. Lowe's cottage?"

"Instead of objecting, I invite it, I request it."

Mr. Vickers nodded agreeably.

"Who can I telegraph to in America to learn something about your standing as a university man?"

"Dean Ingram, Ohio State, Columbus, Ohio, U. S. A."

Vickers made this note, then turned to Lowe.

"I suppose you've known Mr. Poggioli for a long time, Mr. Lowe?"

"Why n-no, I haven't," admitted the clerk.

"Where did you meet him?"

"Sailing from Barbuda to Antigua. On the *Trevemore*."

"Did he seem to have respectable American friends aboard?"

Lowe hesitated and flushed faintly.

"I—can hardly say."

"Why?"

"If I tell you Mr. Poggioli's mode of travel I am afraid you would hold it to his disadvantage."

"How did he travel?" queried the officer in surprise.

"The fact is he traveled as a deck passenger."

"You mean he had no cabin, shipped along on deck with the Negroes!"

"I did it myself!" cried Lowe, growing ruddy. "We couldn't get a cabin—they were all occupied."

The American reflected rapidly, and realized that Vickers could easily find out the real state of things from the ship's agents up the islands.

"Chief," said the psychologist with a tongue that felt thick, "I boarded the *Trevemore* at St. Kitts. There were cabins available. I chose deck passage deliberately. I wanted to study the natives."

"Then you are broke, just as I thought," ejaculated Mr. Vickers, "and I'll bet pounds to pence we'll find the jewelry around your place somewhere."

The chief hailed a passing cab, called a plain-clothes man, put the three in the vehicle and started them briskly back up Prince Edward's Street, toward Tragarette Road, and thence to Lowe's cottage beyond the Indian village and its ill-starred temple.

The three men and the Negro driver trotted back up Tragarette, each lost in his own thoughts. The plain-clothes man rode on the front seat with the cabman, but occasionally he glanced back to look at his prisoner. Lowe evidently was reflecting how this contretemps would affect his social and business standing in the city. The Negro also kept peering back under the hood of his cab, and finally he ejaculated:

"Killum jess to see 'um die. I declah, dese 'Mericans——" and he shook his kinky head.

A hot resentment rose up in the psychologist at this con-

tinued recurrence of that detestable crime. He realized with deep resentment that the crimes of particular Americans were held tentatively against all American citizens, while their great national charities and humanities were forgotten with the breath that told them. In the midst of these angry thoughts the cab drew up before the clerk's garden gate.

All got out. Lowe let them in with a key and then the three walked in a kind of grave haste across the lawn. The door was opened by Ram Jon, who took their hats and then followed them into the room Lowe had set apart for his guest.

This room, like all Trinidad chambers, was furnished in the sparest and coolest manner possible; a table, three chairs, a bed with sheets, and Poggioli's trunk. It was so open to inspection nothing could have been concealed in it. The plain-clothes man opened the table drawer.

"Would you mind opening your trunk, Mr. Poggioli?"

The American got out his keys, knelt and undid the hasp of his wardrobe trunk, then swung the two halves apart. One side held containers, the other suits. Poggioli opened the drawers casually; collar and handkerchief box at the top, hat box, shirt box. As he did this came a faint clinking sound. The detective stepped forward and lifted out the shirts. Beneath them lay a mass of coins and bangles flung into the tray helter-skelter.

The American stared with an open mouth, unable to say a word.

The plain-clothes man snapped with a certain indignant admiration in his voice: "Your nerve almost got you by!"

The thing seemed unreal to the American. He had the same uncanny feeling that he had experienced when the procession entered the temple. Materiality seemed to have

slipped a cog. A wild thought came to him that somehow the Hindus had dematerialized the gold and caused it to reappear in his trunk. Then there came a terrifying fancy that he had committed the crime in his sleep. This last clung to his mind. After all, he had murdered the little girl bride, Maila Ran!

The plain-clothes man spoke to Lowe:

"Have your man bring me a sack to take this stuff back to headquarters."

Ram Jon slithered from the room and presently returned with a sack. The inspector took his handkerchief, lifted the pieces out with it, one by one, and placed them in the sack.

"Lowe," said Poggioli pitifully, "you don't believe I did this, do you?"

The bank clerk wiped his face with his handkerchief.

"In your trunk, Poggioli——"

"If I did it I was sleepwalking!" cried the unhappy man. "My God, to think it is possible—but right here in my own trunk——" he stood staring at the bag, at the shirt box.

The plain-clothes man said dryly: "We might as well start back, I suppose. This is all."

Lowe suddenly cast in his lot with his guest.

"I'll go back with you, Poggioli. I'll see you through this pinch. Somehow I can't, I won't believe you did it!"

"Thanks! Thanks!"

The bank clerk masked his emotion under a certain grim facetiousness.

"You know, Poggioli, you set out to clear Boodman Lal—it looks as if you've done it."

"No, he didn't," denied the plain-clothes man. "Bood-

man Lal was out of jail at least an hour before you fellows drove up a while ago."

"Out—had you turned him out?"

"Yes."

"How was that?"

"Because he didn't go to the temple at all last night with his wife. He went down to Queen's Park Hotel and played billiards till one o'clock. He called up some friends and proved that easily enough."

Lowe stared at his friend, aghast.

"My word, Poggioli, that leaves nobody but—you." The psychologist lost all semblance of resistance.

"I don't know anything about it. If I did it I was asleep. That's all I can say. The coolies——" He had a dim notion of accusing them again, but he recalled that he had proved to himself clearly and logically that they were innocent. "I don't know anything about it," he repeated helplessly.

Half an hour later the three men were at police headquarters once more, and the plain-clothes man and the turnkey, a humble, gray sort of man, took the American back to a cell. The turnkey unlocked one in a long row of cells and swung it open for Poggioli.

The bank clerk gave him what encouragement he could.

"Don't be too downhearted. I'll do everything I can. Somehow I believe you are innocent. I'll hire your lawyers, cable your friends——"

Poggioli was repeating a stunned "Thanks! Thanks!" as the cell door shut between them. The bolt clashed home and was locked. And the men were tramping down the iron corridor. Poggioli was alone.

There was a chair and a bunk in the cell. The psychologist looked at these with an irrational feeling that he

would not stay in the prison long enough to warrant his sitting down. Presently he did sit down on the bunk.

He sat perfectly still and tried to assemble his thoughts against the mountain of adverse evidence which suddenly had been piled against him. His sleep in the temple, the murder, the coins in his shirt box—after all he must have committed the crime in his sleep.

As he sat with his head in his hands pondering this theory, it grew more and more incredible. To commit the murder in his sleep, to put the coins in the pockets of the beggars in a clever effort to divert suspicion, to bring the gold to Lowe's cottage, and then to go back and lie down on the mat, all while he was asleep—that was impossible. He could not believe any human being could perform so fantastic, so complicated a feat.

On the other hand, no other criminal would place the whole booty in Poggioli's trunk and so lose it. That too was irrational. He was forced back to his dream theory.

When he accepted this hypothesis he wondered just what he had dreamed. If he had really murdered the girl in a nightmare, then the murder was stamped somewhere in his subconscious, divided from his day memories by the nebulous associations of sleep. He wondered if he could reproduce them.

To recall a lost dream is perhaps one of the nicest tasks that ever a human brain was driven to. Poggioli, being a psychologist, had had a certain amount of experience with such attempts. Now he lay down on his bunk and began the effort in a mechanical way.

He recalled as vividly as possible his covert exit from Lowe's cottage, his walk down Tragarette Road between perfumed gardens, the lights of Peru, and finally his entrance into the temple. He imaged again the temple at-

tendant, Gooka, looking curiously at him, but giving him tea and rice and pointing out his rug. Poggioli remembered that he lay down on the rug on his back with his hands under his head exactly as he was now lying on his cell bunk. For a while he had stared at the illuminated image of Krishna, then at the dark spring of the dome over his head.

And as he lay there, gazing thus, his thoughts had begun to waver, to lose beat with his senses, to make misinterpretations. He had thought that the Krishna moved slightly, then settled back and became a statue again—here some tenuous connection in his thoughts snapped, and he lost his whole picture in the hard bars of his cell again.

Poggioli lay relaxed a while, then began once more. He reached the point where the Krishna moved, seemed about to speak, and then—there he was back in his cell.

It was nerve-racking, tantalizing, this fishing for the gossamers of a dream which continually broke; this pursuing the grotesqueries of a nightmare and trying to connect it with his solid everyday life of thought and action. What had he dreamed? What had he done in his dream?

Minutes dragged out as Poggioli pursued the vanished visions of his head. Yes, it had seemed to him that the image of the Buddha moved, that it had even risen from its attitude of meditation, and suddenly, with a little thrill, Poggioli remembered that the dome of the Hindu temple was opened and this left him staring upward into a vast abyss. It seemed to the psychologist that he stared upward, and the Krishna stared upward, both gazing into an unending space, and presently he realized that he and the great upward-staring Krishna were one; that they had always been one; and that their oneness filled all space with enormous, with infinite power. But this oneness which was

Poggioli was alone in an endless, featureless space. No other thing existed, because nothing had ever been created; there was only a creator. All the creatures and matter which had ever been or ever would be were wrapped up in him, Poggioli, or Buddha. And then Poggioli saw that space and time had ceased to be, for space and time are the offspring of division. And at last Krishna or Poggioli was losing all entity or being in this tranced immobility.

And Poggioli began struggling desperately against nothingness. He writhed at his deadened muscles, he willed in torture to retain some vestige of being, and at last after what seemed millenniums of effort he formed the thought:

"I would rather lose my oneness with Krishna and become the vilest and poorest of creatures—to mate, fight, love, lust, kill, and be killed than to be lost in this terrible trance of the universal!"

And when he had formed this tortured thought Poggioli remembered that he had awakened and it was five o'clock in the morning. He had arisen with a throbbing headache and had gone home.

That was his dream.

The American arose from his bunk filled with the deepest satisfaction from his accomplishment. Then he recalled with surprise that all five of the coolies had much the same dream; grandiloquence and power accompanied by great unhappiness.

"That was an odd thing," thought the psychologist, "six men dreaming the same dream in different terms. There must have been some physical cause for such a phenomenon."

Then he remembered that he had heard the same story from another source. Old Hira Dass in his marble court

had expressed the same sentiment, complaining of the emptiness of his riches and power. However—and this was crucial—Hira Dass's grief was not a mere passing nightmare, it was his settled condition.

With this a queer idea popped into Poggioli's mind. Could not these six dreams have been a transference of an idea? While he and the coolies lay sleeping with passive minds, suppose old Hira Dass had entered the temple with his great unhappiness in his mind, and suppose he had committed some terrible deed which wrought his emotions to a monsoon of passion. Would not his horrid thoughts have registered themselves in different forms on the minds of the sleeping men!

Here Poggioli's ideas danced about like the molecules of a crystal in solution, each one rushing of its own accord to take its appointed place in a complicated crystalline design. And so a complete understanding of the murder of little Maila Ran rushed in upon him.

Poggioli leaped to his feet and halloed his triumph.

"Here, Vickers! Lowe! Turnkey! I have it! I've solved it! Turn me out! I know who killed the girl!"

After he had shouted for several minutes Poggioli saw the form of a man coming up the dark aisle with a lamp. He was surprised at the lamp but passed over it.

"Turnkey!" he cried, "I know who murdered the child —old Hira Dass! Now listen——" He was about to relate his dream, but realized that would avail nothing in an English court, so he leaped to the physical end of the crime, matter with which the English juggle so expertly. His thoughts danced into shape.

"Listen, turnkey, go tell Vickers to take that gold and develop all the finger prints on it—he'll find Hira Dass's prints! Also, tell him to follow out that opiate clue I gave

him—he'll find Hira Dass's servant bought the opiate. Also, Hira Dass sent a man to put the gold in my trunk. See if you can't find brass or steel filings in my room where the scoundrel sat and filed a new key. Also, give Ram Jon the third degree; he knows who brought the gold."

The one with the lamp made a gesture.

"They've done all that, sir, long ago."

"They did!"

"Certainly, sir, and old Hira Dass confessed everything, though why a rich old man like him should have murdered a pretty child is more than I can see. These Hindus are unaccountable, sir, even the millionaires."

Poggioli passed over so simple a query.

"But why did the old devil pick on me for a scapegoat?" he cried, puzzled.

"Oh, he explained that to the police, sir. He said he picked on a white man so the police would make a thorough investigation and be sure to catch him. In fact, he said, sir, that he had willed that you should come and sleep in the temple that night."

Poggioli stared with a little prickling sensation at this touch of the occult world.

"What I can't see, sir," went on the man with the lamp, "was why the old coolie wanted to be caught and hanged—why didn't he commit suicide?"

"Because then his soul would have returned in the form of some beast. He wanted to be slain. He expects to be reborn instantly in Benares with little Maila Ran. He hopes to be a great man with wife and children."

"Nutty idea!" cried the fellow.

But the psychologist sat staring at the lamp with a queer feeling that possibly such a fantastic idea might be true after all. For what goes with this passionate, uneasy

force in man when he dies? May not the dead struggle to reanimate themselves as he had done in his dream? Perhaps the numberless dead still will to live and be divided; and perhaps living things are a result of the struggles of the dead, and not the dead of the living.

His thoughts suddenly shifted back to the present.

"Turnkey," he snapped with academic sharpness, "why didn't you come and tell me of old Hira Dass's confession the moment it occurred? What did you mean, keeping me locked up here when you knew I was an innocent man?"

"Because I couldn't," said the form with the lamp sorrowfully, "Old Hira Dass didn't confess until a month and ten days after you were hanged, sir."

And the lamp went out.

THE INVESTORS

A Mystery Story

BY EDGAR WALLACE

FROM

"THE MURDER BOOK OF J. G. REEDER"

MR. REEDER solves twenty-seven murders in one of the most thrilling mystery tales by the master mind of crime.

The Investors

THERE are seven million people in Greater London and each one of those seven millions is in theory and practice equal under the law and commonly precious to the community. So that, if one is wilfully wronged, another must be punished; and if one dies of premeditated violence, his slayer must hang by the neck until he be dead.

It is rather difficult for the sharpest law-eyes to keep tag of seven million people, at least one million of whom never keep still and are generally unattached to any particular domicile. It is equally difficult to place an odd twenty thousand or so who have domiciles but no human association. These include tramps, aged maiden ladies in affluent circumstances,

peripatetic members of the criminal classes, and other friendless individuals.

Sometimes uneasy inquiries come through to headquarters. Mainly they are most timid and deferential. Mr. X. has not seen his neighbour, Mr. Y., for a week. No, he doesn't know Mr. Y. Nobody does. A little old man who had no friends and spent his fine days pottering in a garden overlooked by his more gregarious neighbour. And now Mr. Y. potters no more. His milk has not been taken in; his blinds are drawn. Come a sergeant of police and a constable who break a window and climb through, and Mr. Y. is dead somewhere—dead of starvation or a fit or suicide. Should this be the case, all is plain sailing. But suppose the house empty and Mr. Y. disappeared. Here the situation becomes difficult and delicate.

Miss Elver went away to Switzerland. She was a middle-aged spinster who had the appearance of being comfortably circumstanced. She went away, locked up her house, and never came back. Switzerland looked for her; the myrmidons of Mussolini, that hatefully effi-

cient man, searched North Italy from Domodossola to Montecatini. And the search did not yield a thin-faced maiden lady with a slight squint.

And then Mr. Charles Boyson Middlekirk, an eccentric and overpowering old man who quarrelled with his neighbours about their noisy children, he too went away. He told nobody where he was going. He lived alone with his three cats and was not on speaking terms with anybody else. He did not return to his grimy house.

He too was well off and reputedly a miser. So was Mrs. Athbell Marting, a dour widow who lived with her drudge of a niece. This lady was in the habit of disappearing without any preliminary announcement of her intention. The niece was allowed to order from the local tradesmen just sufficient food to keep body and soul together, and when Mrs. Marting returned (as she invariably did) the bills were settled with a great deal of grumbling on the part of the payer, and that was that. It was believed that Mrs. Marting went to Boulogne

or to Paris or even to Brussels. But one day she went out and never came back. Six months later her niece advertised for her, choosing the cheapest papers—having an eye to the day of reckoning.

"Queer sort of thing," said the Public Prosecutor, who had before him the dossiers of four people (three women and a man) who had so vanished in three months.

He frowned, pressed a bell, and Mr. Reeder came in. Mr. Reeder took the chair that was indicated, looked owlishly over his glasses, and shook his head as though he understood the reason for his summons and denied his understanding in advance.

"What do you make of these disappearances?" asked his chief.

"You cannot make any positive of a negative," said Mr. Reeder carefully. "London is a large place full of strange, mad people who live such—um—commonplace lives that the wonder is that more of them do not disappear in order to do something different from what they are accustomed to doing."

"Have you seen these particulars?"

Mr. Reeder nodded.

"I have copies of them," he said. "Mr. Salter very kindly——"

The Public Prosecutor rubbed his head in perplexity.

"I see nothing in these cases—nothing in common, I mean. Four is a fairly low average for a big city——"

"Twenty-seven in twelve months," interrupted his detective apologetically.

"Twenty-seven—are you sure?" The great official was astounded.

Mr. Reeder nodded again.

"They were all people with a little money; all were drawing a fairly large income, which was paid to them in bank-notes on the first of every month—nineteen of them were, at any rate. I have yet to verify eight—and they were all most reticent as to where their revenues came from. None of them had any personal friends or relatives who were on terms of friendship, except Mrs. Marting. Beyond these

points of resemblance there was nothing to connect one with the other."

The Prosecutor looked at him sharply, but Mr. Reeder was never sarcastic. Not obviously so, at any rate.

"There is another point which I omitted to mention," he went on. "After their disappearance no further money came for them. It came for Mrs. Marting when she was away on her jaunts, but it ceased when she went away on her final journey."

"But twenty-seven—are you sure?"

Mr. Reeder reeled off the list, giving name, address, and date of disappearance.

"What do you think has happened to them?"

Mr. Reeder considered for a moment, staring glumly at the carpet.

"I should imagine that they were murdered," he said, almost cheerfully, and the Prosecutor half rose from his chair.

"You are in your gayest mood this morning, Mr. Reeder," he said sardonically. "Why on earth should they be murdered?"

Mr. Reeder did not explain. The interview

took place in the late afternoon, and he was anxious to be gone, for he had a tacit appointment to meet a young lady of exceeding charm who at five minutes after five would be waiting on the corner of Westminster Bridge and Thames Embankment for the Lee car.

The sentimental qualities of Mr. Reeder were entirely unknown. There are those who say that his sorrow over those whom fate and ill-fortune brought into his punitive hands was the veriest hypocrisy. There were others who believed that he was genuinely pained to see a fellow-creature sent behind bars through his efforts and evidence.

His housekeeper, who thought he was a woman-hater, told her friends in confidence that he was a complete stranger to the tender emotions which enlighten and glorify humanity. In the ten years which she had sacrificed to his service he had displayed neither emotion nor tenderness except to inquire whether her sciatica was better or to express a wish that she should take a holiday by the sea. She was a woman beyond middle age, but there is no

period of life wherein a woman gives up hoping for the best. Though the most perfect of servants in all respects, she secretly despised him, called him, to her intimates, a frump, and suspected him of living apart from an ill-treated wife. This lady was a widow (as she had told him when he first engaged her) and she had seen better—far better—days.

Her visible attitude toward Mr. Reeder was one of respect and awe. She excused the queer character of his callers and his low acquaintances. She forgave him his square-toed shoes and high, flat-crowned hat, and even admired the ready-made Ascot cravat he wore and which was fastened behind the collar with a little buckle, the prongs of which invariably punctured his fingers when he fastened it. But there is a limit to all hero-worship, and when she discovered that Mr. Reeder was in the habit of waiting to escort a young lady to town every day, and frequently found it convenient to escort her home, the limit was reached.

Mrs. Hambleton told her friends—and they agreed—that there was no fool like an old fool,

and that marriages between the old and the young invariably end in the divorce court (December *v.* May and July). She used to leave copies of a favourite Sunday newspaper on his table, where he could not fail to see the flaring headlines:

OLD MAN'S WEDDING ROMANCE
WIFE'S PERFIDY BRINGS GREY HAIR IN SORROW
TO THE LAW COURTS.

Whether Mr. Reeder perused these human documents she did not know. He never referred to the tragedies of ill-assorted unions, and went on meeting Miss Belman every morning at nine o'clock and at five-five in the afternoons whenever his business permitted.

He so rarely discussed his own business or introduced the subject that was exercising his mind that it was remarkable he should make even an oblique reference to his work. Possibly he would not have done so if Miss Margaret Belman had not introduced (unwillingly) a leader of conversation which traced indirectly to the disappearances.

They had been talking of holidays: Margaret was going to Cromer for a fortnight.

"I shall leave on the second. My monthly dividends (doesn't that sound grand?) are due on the first——"

"Eh?"

Reeder slued round. Dividends in most companies are paid at half-yearly intervals.

"Dividends, Miss Margaret?"

She flushed a little at his surprise and then laughed.

"You didn't realise that I was a woman of property?" she bantered him. "I receive ten pounds a month—my father left me a little house property when he died. I sold the cottages two years ago for a thousand pounds and found a wonderful investment."

Mr. Reeder made a rapid calculation.

"You are drawing something like 12½ per cent.," he said. "That is indeed a wonderful investment. What is the name of the company?"

She hesitated.

"I'm afraid I can't tell you that. You see—well, it's rather secret. It is to do with a South

American syndicate that supplies arms to—what do you call them—insurgents! I know it is rather dreadful to make money that way—I mean out of arms and things, but it pays terribly well and I can't afford to miss the opportunity."

Reeder frowned.

"But why is it such a terrible secret?" he asked. "Quite a number of respectable people make money out of armament concerns."

Again she showed reluctance to explain her meaning.

"We are pledged—the shareholders, I mean—not to divulge our connection with the company," she said. "That is one of the agreements I had to sign. And the money comes regularly. I have had nearly £300 of my thousand back in dividends already."

"Humph!" said Mr. Reeder, wise enough not to press his question. There was another day to-morrow.

But the opportunity to which he looked forward on the following morning was denied to him. Somebody played a grim "joke" on him

—the kind of joke to which he was accustomed, for there were men who had good reason to hate him, and never a year passed but one or the other sought to repay him for his unkindly attentions.

"Your name is Reeder, ain't it?"

Mr. Reeder, tightly grasping his umbrella with both hands, looked over his spectacles at the shabby man who stood at the bottom of the steps. He was on the point of leaving his house in the Brockley Road for his office in Whitehall, and since he was a methodical man and worked to a time table, he resented in his mild way this interruption which had already cost him fifteen seconds of valuable time.

"You're the fellow who shopped Ike Walker, ain't you?"

Mr. Reeder had indeed "shopped" many men. He was by profession a shopper, which, translated from the argot, means a man who procures the arrest of an evildoer. Ike Walker he knew very well indeed. He was a clever, a too clever, forger of bills of exchange, and was

at that precise moment almost permanently employed as orderly in the convict prison at Dartmoor, and might account himself fortunate if he held this easy job for the rest of his twelve years' sentence.

His interrogator was a little hard-faced man wearing a suit that had evidently been originally intended for somebody of greather girth and more commanding height. His trousers were turned up noticeably; his waistcoat was full of folds and tucks which only an amateur tailor would have dared, and only one superior to the criticism of his fellows would have worn. His hard, bright eyes were fixed on Mr. Reeder, but there was no menace in them so far as the detective could read.

"Yes, I was instrumental in arresting Ike Walker," said Mr. Reeder, almost gently.

The man put his hand in his pocket and brought out a crumpled packet enclosed in green oiled silk. Mr. Reeder unfolded the covering and found a soiled and crumpled envelope.

"That's from Ike," said the man. "He sent it out of stir by a gent who was discharged yesterday."

Mr. Reeder was not shocked by this revelation. He knew that prison rules were made to be broken, and that worse things have happened in the best regulated jails than this item of a smuggled letter. He opened the envelope, keeping his eyes on the man's face, took out the crumpled sheet and read the five or six lines of writing.

DEAR REEDER:

Here is a bit of a riddle for you.

What other people have got, you can have. I haven't got it, but it is coming to you. It's red-hot when you get it, but you're cold when it goes away.

Your loving friend,

IKE WALKER

(doing a twelve stretch because you went on the witness stand and told a lot of lies).

Mr. Reeder looked up and their eyes met.

"Your friend is a little mad, one thinks?" he asked politely.

"He ain't a friend of mine. A gent asked me to bring it," said the messenger.

"On the contrary," said Mr. Reeder pleasantly, "he gave it to you in Dartmoor Prison yesterday. Your name is Mills; you have eight convictions for burglary, and will have your ninth before the year is out. You were released two days ago—I saw you reporting at Scotland Yard."

The man was for the moment alarmed and in two minds to bolt. Mr. Reeder glanced along Brockley Road, saw a slim figure, that was standing at the corner, cross to a waiting tramcar, and, seeing his opportunity vanish, readjusted his time table.

"Come inside, Mr. Mills."

"I don't want to come inside," said Mr. Mills, now thoroughly agitated. "He asked me to give this to you and I've give it. There's nothing else——"

Mr. Reeder crooked his finger.

"Come, birdie!" he said, with great amiability. "And please don't annoy me! I am quite capable of sending you back to your friend Mr. Walker. I am really a most unpleasant man if I am upset."

The messenger followed meekly, wiped his boots with great vigour on the mat and tiptoed up the carpeted stairs to the big study where Mr. Reeder did most of his thinking.

"Sit down, Mills."

With his own hands Mr. Reeder placed a chair for his uncomfortable visitor, and then, pulling another up to his big writing table, he spread the letter before him, adjusted his glasses, read, his lips moving, and then leaned back in his chair.

"I give it up," he said. "Read me this riddle."

"I don't know what's in the letter——" began the man.

"Read me this riddle."

As he handed the letter across the table, the man betrayed himself, for he rose and pushed back his chair with a startled, horrified expression that told Mr. Reeder quite a lot. He laid the letter down on his desk, took a large tumbler from the sideboard, inverted it and covered the scrawled paper. Then:

"Wait," he said, "and don't move till I come back."

And there was an unaccustomed venom in his tone that made the visitor shudder.

Reeder passed out of the room to the bathroom, pulled up his sleeves with a quick jerk of his arm and, turning the faucet, let hot water run over his hands before he reached for a small bottle on a shelf, poured a liberal portion into the water and let his hands soak. This done, for three minutes he scrubbed his fingers with a nail-brush, dried them, and, removing his coat and waistcoat carefully, hung them over the edge of the bath. He went back to his uncomfortable guest in his shirt-sleeves.

"Our friend Walker is employed in the hospital," he stated rather than asked. "What have you had there—scarlet fever or something worse?"

He glanced down at the letter under the glass.

"Scarlet fever, of course," he said, "and the letter has been systematically infected. Walker is almost clever."

The wood of a fire was laid in the grate. He carried the letter and the blotting-paper to the

hearth, lit the kindling and thrust paper and letter into the flames.

"Almost clever," he said musingly. "Of course, he is one of the orderlies in the hospital. It was scarlet fever, I think you said?"

The gaping man nodded.

"Of a virulent type, of course. How very fascinating!"

He thrust his hands in his pockets and looked down benevolently at the wretched emissary of the vengeful Walker.

"You may go now, Mills," he said gently. "I rather think that you are infected. That ridiculous piece of oiled silk is quite inadequate—which means 'quite useless'—as a protection against wandering germs. You will have scarlet fever in three days, and will probably be dead at the end of the week. I will send you a wreath."

He opened the door, pointed to the stairway and the man slunk out.

Mr. Reeder watched him through the window, saw him cross the street and disappear

round the corner into the Lewisham High Road, and then, going up to his bedroom, he put on a newer frock-coat and waistcoat, drew on his hands a pair of fabric gloves and went forth to his labours.

He did not expect to meet Mr. Mills again, never dreaming that the gentleman from Dartmoor was planning a "bust" which would bring them again into contact. For Mr. Reeder the incident was closed.

That day news of another disappearance had come through from police headquarters, and Mr. Reeder was waiting at ten minutes before five at the rendezvous for the girl who, he instinctively knew, could give him a thread of the clue. He was determined that this time his inquiries should bear fruit; but it was not until they had reached the end of Brockley Road, and he was walking slowly up toward the girl's boarding-house, that she gave him a hint.

"Why are you so persistent, Mr. Reeder?" she asked, a little impatiently. "Do you wish to invest money? Because, if you do, I'm sorry

I can't help you. That is another agreement we made, that we would not introduce new shareholders."

Mr. Reeder stopped, took off his hat and rubbed the back of his head (his housekeeper, watching him from an upper window, was perfectly certain he was proposing and had been rejected).

"I am going to tell you something, Miss Belman, and I hope—er—that I shall not alarm you."

And very briefly he told the story of the disappearances and the queer coincidence which marked every case—the receipt of a dividend on the first of every month. As he proceeded, the colour left the girl's face.

"You are serious, of course?" she said, serious enough herself. "You wouldn't tell me that unless—— The company is the Mexico City Investment Syndicate. They have offices in Portugal Street."

"How did you come to hear of them?" asked Mr. Reeder.

"I had a letter from their manager, Mr. De

Silvo. He told me that a friend had mentioned my name, and gave full particulars of the investment."

"Have you that letter?"

She shook her head.

"No; I was particularly asked to bring it with me when I went to see them. Although, in point of fact, I never did see them," smiled the girl. "I wrote to their lawyers—will you wait? I have their letter."

Mr. Reeder waited at the gate while the girl went into the house and returned presently with a small portfolio, from which she took a quarto sheet. It was headed with the name of a legal firm, Bracher & Bracher, and was the usual formal type of letter one expects from a lawyer.

DEAR MADAM:

Re Mexico City Investment Syndicate: We act as lawyers to this syndicate, and so far as we know it is a reputable concern. We feel that it is only due to us that we should say that we do not advise investments in any concern which offers such large profits, for usually there is a corresponding risk. We know, however, that this syndicate has paid 12½ per cent. and sometimes as much

as 20 per cent., and we have had no complaints about them. We cannot, of course, as lawyers, guarantee the financial soundness of any of our clients, and can only repeat that, in so far as we have been able to ascertain, the syndicate conducts a genuine business and enjoys a very sound financial backing.

Yours faithfully,
BRACHER & BRACHER.

"You say you never saw De Silvo?"

She shook her head.

"No; I saw Mr. Bracher, but when I went to the office of the syndicate, which is in the same building, I found only a clerk in attendance. Mr. De Silvo had been called out of town. I had to leave the letter because the lower portion was an application for shares in the syndicate. The capital could be withdrawn at three days' notice, and I must say that this last clause decided me; and when I had a letter from Mr. De Silvo accepting my investment, I sent him the money."

Mr. Reeder nodded.

"And you've received your dividends regularly ever since?" he said.

"Every month," said the girl triumphantly.

"And really I think you're wrong in connecting the company with these disappearances."

Mr. Reeder did not reply. That afternoon he made it his business to call at 179 Portugal Street. It was a two-story building of an old-fashioned type. A wide flagged hall led into the building; a set of old-fashioned stairs ran up to the "top floor," which was occupied by a China merchant; and from the hall led three doors. That on the left bore the legend "Bracher & Bracher, Solicitors," and immediately facing was the office of the Mexican syndicate. At the far end of the passage was a door which exhibited the name "John Baston," but as to Mr. Baston's business there was no indication.

Mr. Reeder knocked gently at the door of the syndicate and a voice bade him come in. A young man, wearing glasses, was sitting at a typewriting table, a pair of dictaphone receivers in his ears, and he was typing rapidly.

"No, sir, Mr. De Silvo is not in. He only comes in about twice a week," said the clerk. "Will you give me your name?"

"It is not important," said Reeder gently, and went out, closing the door behind him.

He was more fortunate in his call upon Bracher & Bracher, for Mr. Joseph Bracher was in his office: a tall, florid gentleman who wore a large rose in his buttonhole. The firm of Bracher & Bracher was evidently a prosperous one, for there were half a dozen clerks in the outer office, and Mr. Bracher's private sanctum, with its big partner desk, was a model of shabby comfort.

"Sit down, Mr. Reeder," said the lawyer, glancing at the card.

In a few words Mr. Reeder stated his business, and Mr. Bracher smiled.

"It is fortunate you came to-day," he said. "If it were to-morrow we should not be able to give you any information. The truth is, we have had to ask Mr. De Silvo to find other lawyers. No, no, there is nothing wrong, except that they constantly refer their clients to us, and we feel that we are becoming in the nature of sponsors for their clients, and that, of course, is very undesirable."

"Have you a record of the people who have written to you from time to time asking your advice?"

Mr. Bracher shook his head.

"It is a curious thing to confess, but we haven't," he said; "and that is one of the reasons why we have decided to give up this client. Three weeks ago, the letter-book in which we kept copies of all letters sent to people who applied for a reference most unaccountably disappeared. It was put in the safe overnight, and in the morning, although there was no sign of tampering with the lock, it had vanished. The circumstances were so mysterious, and my brother and I were so deeply concerned, that we applied to the syndicate to give us a list of their clients, and that request was never complied with."

Mr. Reeder sought inspiration in the ceiling.

"Who is John Baston?" he asked, and the lawyer laughed.

"There again I am ignorant. I believe he is a very wealthy financier, but, so far as I know, he only comes to his office for three

months in the year, and I have never seen him."

Mr. Reeder offered him his flabby hand and walked back along Portugal Street, his chin on his breast, his hands behind him dragging his umbrella, so that he bore a ludicrous resemblance to some strange tailed animal.

That night he waited again for the girl, but she did not appear, and although he remained at the rendezvous until half-past five he did not see her. This was not very unusual, for sometimes she had to work late, and he went home without any feeling of apprehension. He finished his own frugal dinner and then walked across to the boarding-house. Miss Belman had not arrived, the landlady told him, and he returned to his study and telephoned first to the office where she was employed and then to the private address of her employer.

"She left at half-past four," was the surprising news. "Somebody telephoned to her and she asked me if she might go early."

"Oh!" said Mr. Reeder blankly.

He did not go to bed that night, but sat up

in a small room at Scotland Yard, reading the brief reports which came in from the various divisions. And with the morning came the sickening realisation that Margaret Belman's name must be added to those who had disappeared in such extraordinary circumstances.

He dozed in the big Windsor chair. At eight o'clock he returned to his own house and shaved and bathed, and when the Public Prosecutor arrived at his office he found Mr. Reeder waiting for him in the corridor. It was a changed Mr. Reeder, and the change was not due entirely to lack of sleep. His voice was sharper; he had lost some of that atmosphere of apology which usually enveloped him.

In a few words he told of Margaret Belman's disappearance.

"Do you connect De Silvo with this?" asked his chief.

"Yes, I think I do," said the other quietly, and then: "There is only one hope, and it is a very slender one—a very slender one indeed!"

He did not tell the Public Prosecutor in

what that hope consisted, but walked down to the offices of the Mexico City Investment Syndicate.

Mr. De Silvo was not in. He would have been very much surprised if he had been. He crossed the hallway to see the lawyer, and this time he found Mr. Ernest Bracher present with his brother.

When Reeder spoke to the point, it was very much to the point.

"I am leaving a police officer in Portugal Street to arrest De Silvo the moment he puts in an appearance. I feel that you, as his lawyers, should know this," he said.

"But why on earth——?" began Mr. Joseph Bracher, in a tone of astonishment.

"I don't know what charge I shall bring against him, but it will certainly be a very serious one," said Reeder. "For the moment I have not confided to Scotland Yard the basis for my suspicions, but your client has got to tell a very plausible story and produce indisputable proof of his innocence to have any hope of escape."

"I am quite in the dark," said the lawyer, mystified. "What has he been doing? Is his syndicate a fraud?"

"I know nothing more fraudulent," said the other shortly. "To-morrow I intend to obtain the necessary authority to search his papers and to search the room and papers of Mr. John Baston. I have an idea that I shall find something in that room of considerable interest to me."

It was eight o'clock that night before he left Scotland Yard, and he was turning toward the familiar corner, when he saw a car come from Westminster Bridge toward Scotland Yard. Somebody leaned out of the window and signalled him, and the car turned. It was a two-seater coupé and the driver was Mr. Joseph Bracher.

"We've found De Silvo," he said breathlessly as he brought the car to a standstill at the curb and jumped out.

He was very agitated and his face was pale. Mr. Reeder could have sworn that his teeth were chattering.

"There's something wrong—very badly wrong," he went on. "My brother has been trying to get the truth from him—my God! if he has done these terrible things I shall never forgive myself."

"Where is he?" asked Mr. Reeder.

"He came just before dinner to our house at Dulwich. My brother and I are bachelors and we live there alone now, and he has been to dinner before. My brother questioned him and he made certain admissions which are almost incredible. The man must be mad."

"What did he say?"

"I can't tell you. Ernest is detaining him until you come."

Mr. Reeder stepped into the car and in a few minutes they were flying across Westminster Bridge toward Camberwell. Lane House, an old-fashioned Georgian residence, lay at the end of a countrified road which was, he found, a cul de sac. The house stood in grounds of considerable size, he noted as they passed up the drive and stopped before the porch. Mr. Bracher alighted and opened the door, and

Reeder passed into a cosily furnished hall. One door was ajar.

"Is that Mr. Reeder?" He recognised the voice of Ernest Bracher, and walked into the room.

The younger Mr. Bracher was standing with his back to the empty fireplace; there was nobody else in the room.

"De Silvo's gone upstairs to lie down," explained the lawyer. "This is a dreadful business, Mr. Reeder."

He held out his hand and Reeder crossed the room to take it. As he put his foot on the square Persian rug before the fireplace, he realised his danger and tried to spring back, but his balance was lost. He felt himself falling through the cavity which the carpet hid, lashed out and caught for a moment the edge of the trap, but as the lawyer came round and raised his foot to stamp upon the clutching fingers, Reeder released his hold and dropped.

The shock of the fall took away his breath, and for a second he sprawled, half lying, half sitting, on the floor of the cellar into which he

had fallen. Looking up, he saw the older of the two leaning over. The square aperture was diminishing in size. There was evidently a sliding panel which covered the hole in normal times.

"We'll deal wth you later, Reeder," said Joseph Bracher with a smile. "We've had quite a lot of clever people here——"

Something cracked in the cellar. The bullet seared the lawyer's cheek, smashed a glass chandelier to fragments, and he stepped back with a yell of fear. In another second the trap was closed and Reeder was alone in a small brick-lined cellar. Not entirely alone, for the automatic pistol he held in his hand was a very pleasant companion in that moment of crisis.

From his hip pocket he took a flat electric hand-lamp, switched on the current and surveyed his prison. The walls and floor were damp; that was the first thing he noticed. In one corner was a small flight of brick steps leading to a locked steel door, and then:

"Mr. Reeder."

He spun round and turned his lamp upon the

speaker. It was Margaret Belman, who had risen from a heap of sacks where she had been sleeping.

"I'm afraid I've got you into very bad trouble," she said, and he marvelled at her calm.

"How long have you been here?"

"Since last night," she answered. "Mr. Bracher telephoned me to see him and he picked me up in his car. They kept me in the other room until to-night, but an hour ago they brought me here."

"Which is the other room?"

She pointed to the steel door. She offered no further details of her capture, and it was not a moment to discuss their misfortune. Reeder went up the steps and tried the door; it was fastened from the other side, and opened inward, he discovered. There was no sign of a keyhole. He asked her where the door led and she told him that it was to an underground kitchen and coal-cellar. She had hoped to escape, because only a barred window stood between her and freedom in the "little room" where she was kept.

"But the window was very thick," she said, "and of course I could do nothing with the bars."

Reeder made another inspection of the cellar, then sent the light of his lamp up at the ceiling. He saw nothing there except a steel pulley fastened to a beam that crossed the entire width of the cellar.

"Now what on earth is he going to do?" he asked thoughtfully, and as though his enemies had heard the question and were determined to leave him in no doubt as to their plans, there came the sound of gurgling water, and in a second he was ankle-deep.

He put the light on to the place whence the water was coming. There were three circular holes in the wall, from each of which was gushing a solid stream.

"What is it?" she asked in a terrified whisper.

"Get on to the steps and stay there," he ordered peremptorily, and made investigation to see if it was possible to staunch the flow. He saw at a glance that this was impossible. And

now the mystery of the disappearances was a mystery no longer.

The water came up with incredible rapidity, first to his knees, then to his thighs, and he joined her on the steps.

There was no possible escape for them. He guessed the water would come up only so far as would make it impossible for them to reach the beam across the roof or the pulley, the dreadful purpose of which he could guess. The dead must be got out of this charnel house in some way or other. Strong swimmer as he was, he knew that in the hours ahead it would be impossible to keep afloat.

He slipped off his coat and vest and unbuttoned his collar.

"You had better take off your skirt," he said in a matter-of-fact tone. "Can you swim?"

"Yes," she answered in a low voice.

He did not ask her the real question which was in his mind: for how long could she swim?

There was a long silence; the water crept higher; and then:

"Are you very much afraid?" he asked, and took her hand in his.

"No, I don't think I am," she said. "It is wonderful having you with me—why are they doing this?"

He said nothing, but carried the soft hand to his lips and kissed it.

The water was now reaching the top step. Reeder stood with his back to the iron door, waiting. And then he felt something touch the door from the other side. There was a faint click, as though a bolt had been slipped back. He put her gently aside and held his palms to the door. There was no doubt now: somebody was fumbling on the other side. He went down a step and presently he felt the door yield and come toward him, and there was a momentary gleam of light. In another second he had wrenched the door open and sprung through.

"Hands up!"

Whoever it was had dropped his lamp, and now Mr. Reeder focussed the light of his own torch and nearly dropped.

For the man in the passage was Mills, the ex-convict who had brought the tainted letter from Dartmoor!

"All right, guv'nor, it's a cop," growled the man.

And then the whole explanation flashed upon the detective. In an instant he had gripped the girl by the hand and dragged her through the narrow passage, into which the water was now steadily overrunning.

"Which way did you get in, Mills?" he demanded authoritatively.

"Through the window."

"Show me—quick!"

The convict led the way to what was evidently the window through which the girl had looked with such longing. The bars had been removed; the window sash itself lifted from its rusty hinges; and in another second the three were standing on the grass, with the stars twinkling above them.

"Mills," said Mr. Reeder, and his voice shook, "you came here to 'bust' this house."

"That's right," growled Mills. "I tell you

it's a cop. I'm not going to give you any trouble."

"Skip!" hissed Mr. Reeder. "And skip quick! Now, young lady, we'll go for a little walk."

A few seconds later a patrolling constable was smitten dumb by the apparition of a middle-aged man in shirt and trousers, and a lady who was inadequately attired in a silk petticoat.

* * * * *

"The Mexican company was Bracher & Bracher," explained Reeder to his chief. "There was no John Baston. His room was a passage-way by which the Brachers could get from one room to the other. The clerk in the Mexican syndicate's office was, of course, blind; I spotted that the moment I saw him. There are any number of blind typists employed in the City of London. A blind clerk was necessary if the identity of De Silvo with the Brachers was to be kept a secret.

"Bracher & Bracher had been going badly

for years. It will probably be found that they have made away with clients' money; and they hit upon this scheme of inducing foolish investors to put money into their syndicate on the promise of large dividends. Their victims were well chosen, and Joseph—who was the brains of the organisation—conducted the most rigorous investigation to make sure that these unfortunate people had no intimate friends. If they had any suspicion about an applicant, Brachers would write a letter deprecating the idea of an investment and suggesting that the too-shrewd dupe should find another and a safer method than the Mexican syndicate afforded.

"After they had paid one or two years' dividends the wretched investor was lured to the house at Dulwich and there scientifically killed. You will probably find an unofficial cemetery in their grounds. So far as I can make out, they have stolen more than a hundred and twenty thousand pounds in the past two years by this method."

"It is incredible," said the Prosecutor, "incredible!"

Mr. Reeder shrugged.

"Is there anything more incredible than the Burke and Hare murders? There are Burkes and Hares in every branch of society and in every period of history."

"Why did they delay their execution of Miss Belman?"

Mr. Reeder coughed.

"They wanted to make a clean sweep, but did not wish to kill her until they had me in their hands. I rather suspect"—he coughed again—"that they thought I had an especial interest in the young lady."

"And have you?" asked the Public Prosecutor.

Mr. Reeder did not reply.

HOW LOVE CAME TO GENERAL GRANT

A Humorous Sketch

BY DONALD OGDEN STEWART

FROM

"THE PARODY OUTLINE OF HISTORY"

THE doughty general's courtship of the flower of Kansas womanhood, told after the best manner of Harold Bell Wright, is one of the most hilarious bits of fooling in Dr. Stewart's famous and irreverent outline of history.

HOW LOVE CAME TO GENERAL GRANT

In the Manner of Harold Bell Wright

On a brisk winter evening in the winter of 1864 the palatial Fifth Avenue "palace" of Cornelius van der Griff was brilliantly lighted with many brilliant lights. Outside the imposing front entrance a small group of pedestrians had gathered to gape enviously at the invited guests of the "four hundred" who were beginning to arrive in elegant equipages, expensive ball-dresses and fashionable "swallowtails".

"Hully gee!" exclaimed little Frank, a crippled newsboy who was the only support of an aged mother, as a particularly sumptuous carriage drove up and a stylishly dressed lady of fifty-five or sixty stepped out accompanied

by a haughty society girl and an elderly gentleman in clerical dress. It was Mrs. Rhinelander, a social leader, and her daughter Geraldine, together with the Rev. Dr. Gedney, pastor of an exclusive Fifth Avenue church.

"What common looking people," said Mrs. Rhinelander, surveying the crowd aristocratically with her lorgnette.

"Yes, aren't they?" replied the clergyman with a condescending glance which ill befit his clerical garb.

"I'm glad you don't have people like that *dans votre eglise,* Dr. Gedney," said young Geraldine, who thought it was "smart" to display her proficiency in the stylish French tongue. At this moment the door of the van der Griff residence was opened for them by an imposing footman in scarlet livery and they passed into the abode of the "elect".

"Hully gee!" repeated little Frank.

"What's going on to-night?" asked a newcomer.

"Gee—don't youse know?" answered the

newsboy. "Dis is de van der Griffs' and to-night dey are giving a swell dinner for General Grant. Dat lady wot just went in was old Mrs. Rhinelander. I seen her pitcher in de last Harper's Weekly and dere was a story in de paper dis morning dat her daughter Geraldine was going to marry de General."

"That isn't so," broke in another. "It was just a rumor."

"Well, anyway," said Frank, "I wisht de General would hurry up and come—it's getting cold enough to freeze the tail off a brass monkey." The onlookers laughed merrily at his humorous reference to the frigid temperature, although many cast sympathetic looks at his thin threadbare garments and registered a kindly thought for this brave boy who so philosophically accepted the buffets of fate.

"I bet this is him now," cried Frank, and all waited expectantly as a vehicle drove up. The cabman jumped off his box and held the carriage door open.

"Here you are, Miss Flowers," he said, touching his hat respectfully.

A silver peal of rippling laughter sounded from the interior of the carriage.

"Why Jerry," came in velvet tones addressed to the coachman, "You mustn't be so formal just because I have come to New York to live. Call me 'Miss Ella,' of course, just like you did when we lived out in Kansas," and with these words Miss Ella Flowers, for it was she, stepped out of the carriage.

A hush fell on the crowd as they caught sight of her face—a hush of silent tribute to the clear sweet womanhood of that pure countenance. A young man on the edge of the crowd who was on the verge of becoming a drunkard burst into tears and walked rapidly away to join the nearest church. A pr-st---te who had been plying her nefarious trade on the avenue, sank to her knees to pray for strength to go back to her aged parents on the farm. Another young man, catching sight of Ella's pure face, vowed to write home to his old mother and send her the money he had been expending in the city on drinks and dissipation.

MISS ELLA FLOWERS ARRIVES AT THE PARTY

"A hush fell on the crowd—a hush of silent tribute to the clear, sweet womanhood of that pure countenance. And well might these city people be affected by the sweet, noble virtue which shone forth so radiantly in this Kansas girl's countenance."

And well might these city people be affected by the glimpse of the sweet noble virtue which shone forth so radiantly in this Kansas girl's countenance. Although born in Jersey City, Ella had moved with her parents to the west at an early age and she had grown up in the open country where a man's a man and women lead clean sweet womanly lives. Out in the pure air of God's green places and amid kindly, simple, big hearted folks, little Ella had blossomed and thrived, the pride of the whole country, and as she had grown to womanhood there was many a masculine heart beat a little faster for her presence and many a manly blush of admiration came into the features of her admirers as she whirled gracefully with them in the innocent pleasure of a simple country dance. But on her eighteenth birthday, her parents had passed on to the Great Beyond and the heartbroken Ella had come East to live with Mrs. Montgomery, her aunt in Jersey City. This lady, being socially prominent in New York's "four hundred", was of course quite ambitious that her pretty

little niece from the West should also enter society. For the last three months, therefore, Ella had been fêted at all the better class homes in New York and Jersey City, and as Mrs. van der Griff, the Fifth Avenue social leader, was in the same set as Ella's aunt, it was only natural that when making out her list of guests for the dinner in honor of General Grant she should include the beautiful niece of her friend.

As Ella stepped from the carriage, her gaze fell upon little Frank, the crippled newsboy, and her eyes quickly filled with tears, for social success had not yet caused her to forget that "blessed are the weak". Taking out her purse, she gave Frank a silver dollar and a warm look of sympathy as she passed into the house.

"Gee, there went an angel," whispered the little cripple, and many who heard him silently echoed that thought in their hearts. Nor were they far from wrong.

But even an angel is not free from temptation, and by letting Ella go into society her

aunt was exposing the girl to the whisperings of Satan—whisperings of things material rather than things spiritual. Many a girl just as pure as Ella has found her standards gradually lowered and her moral character slowly weakened by the contact with the so-called "refined" and "cultured" infidels one meets in fashionable society. Many a father and mother whose ambition has caused them to have their daughter go out in society have bitterly repented of that step as they watched the poor girl gradually succumbing to the temptation of the world. Let her who thinks it is "smart" to be in society consider that our brothels with their red plush curtains, their hardwood floors and their luxurious appointments, are filled largely with the worn out belles and débutantes of fashionable society.

The next minute a bugle call sounded down the street and up drove a team of prancing grays. Two soldiers sprang down from the coachman's box and stood at rigid attention while the door of the carriage opened and out stepped General Ulysses S. Grant.

A murmur of admiration swept over the crowd at the sight of his manly inspiring features, in which the clean cut virility of a life free from dissipation was accentuated by the neatly trimmed black beard. His erect military bearing—his neat, well fitting uniform—but above all his frank open face proclaimed him a man's man—a man among men. A cheer burst from the lips of the onlookers and the brave but modest general lowered his eyes and blushed as he acknowledged their greeting.

"Men and women," he said, in a voice which although low, one could see was accustomed to being obeyed, "I thank you for your cheers. It makes my heart rejoice to hear them, for I know you are not cheering me personally but only as one of the many men who are fighting for the cause of liberty and freedom, and for——" the general's voice broke a little, but he mastered his emotion and went on—"for the flag we all love."

At this he pulled from his pocket an American flag and held it up so that all could see.

Cheer after cheer rent the air, and tears came to the general's eyes at this mark of devotion to the common cause.

"Wipe the d--d rebels off the face of the earth, G-d d-- 'em," shouted a too enthusiastic member of the crowd who, I fear, was a little the worse for drink. In an instant General Grant had stepped up to him and fixed upon him those fearless blue eyes.

"My man," said the general, "It hurts me to hear you give vent to those oaths, especially in the presence of ladies. Soldiers do not curse, and I think you would do well to follow their example."

The other lowered his head shamefacedly. "General," he said, "You're right and I apologize."

A smile lit up the general's handsome features and he extended his hand to the other.

"Shake on it," he said simply, and as the crowd roared its approval of this speech the two men "shook".

Meanwhile within the van der Griff house all were agog with excitement in expectation

of the arrival of the distinguished guest. Expensively dressed ladies fluttered here and there amid the elegant appointments; servants in stylish livery passed to and fro with trays of wine and other spirituous liquors.

At the sound of the cheering outside, the haughty Mrs. Rhinelander patted her daughter Geraldine nervously, and between mother and daughter passed a glance of understanding, for both felt that to-night, if ever, was Geraldine's opportunity to win the handsome and popular general.

The doorbell rang, and a hush fell over the chattering assemblage; then came the proud announcement from the doorman—"General Ulysses S. Grant"—and all the society belles crowded forward around the guest of honor.

It had been rumored that the general, being a soldier, was ignorant of social etiquette, but such proved to be far from the case. Indeed, he handled himself with such ease of manner that he captivated all, and for each and every young miss he had an apt phrase or a pretty compliment, greatly to their delight.

"Pleased to know you"—"Glad to shake the hand of such a pretty girl"—"What a nice little hand—I wish I might hold it all evening"—with these and kindred pleasantries the general won the way into the graces of Mrs. van der Griff's fair guests, and many a female heart fluttered in her bosom as she gazed into the clear blue eyes of the soldier, and listened to his well chosen tactful words.

"And how is the dear General this evening?"—this in the affected tone of old Mrs. Rhinelander, as she forced her way through the crowd.

"Finer than silk," replied he, and he added, solicitously, "I hope you have recovered from your lumbago, Mrs. Rhinelander."

"Oh quite," answered she, "and here is Geraldine, General," and the ambitious mother pushed her daughter forward.

"Comment vous portez vous, mon Général," said Geraldine in French, "I hope we can have a nice *tête-a-tête* to-night," and she fawned upon her prey in a manner that would have sickened a less artificial gathering.

Were there not some amid all that fashionable throng in whom ideals of purity and true womanhood lived—some who cared enough for the sacredness of real love to cry upon this hollow mockery that was being used to ensnare the simple, honest soldier? There was only one, and she was at that moment entering the drawing room for the purpose of being presented to the general. Need I name her?

Ella, for it was she, had been upstairs busying herself with her toilet when General Grant had arrived and she now hurried forward to pay her homage to the great soldier. And then, as she caught sight of his face, she stopped suddenly and a deep crimson blush spread over her features. She looked again, and then drew back behind a nearby portiere, her heart beating wildly.

Well did Ella remember where she had seen that countenance before, and as she stood there trembling the whole scene of her folly came back to her. It had happened in Kansas, just before her parents died, on one sunny May morning. She had gone for a walk; her

footsteps had led her to the banks of a secluded lake where she often went when she wished to be alone. Many an afternoon had Ella dreamed idly away on this shore, but that day, for some reason, she had felt unusually full of life and not at all like dreaming. Obeying a thoughtless but innocent impulse, with no intention of evil, she had taken off her clothes and plunged thus **n-k-d** into the cool waters of the lake. After she had swum around a little she began to realize the extent of her folly and was hurriedly swimming towards the shore when a terrific cramp had seized her lower limbs, rendering them powerless. Her first impulse, to scream for help, was quickly checked with a deep blush, as she realized the consequences if a man should hear her call, for nearby was an encampment of Union soldiers, none of whom she knew. The perplexed and helpless girl was in sore straits and was slowly sinking for the third time, when a bearded stranger in soldier's uniform appeared on the bank and dove into the water. To her horror he swam rapidly

towards her—but her shame was soon changed to joy when she realized that he was purposely keeping his eyes tight shut. With a few swift powerful strokes he reached her side, and, blushing deeply, took off his blue coat, fastened it around her, opened his eyes, and swam with her to the shore. Carrying her to where she had left her clothes he stayed only long enough to assure himself that she had completely recovered the use of her limbs, and evidently to spare her further embarrassment, had vanished as quickly and as mysteriously as he had appeared.

Many a night after that had Ella lain awake thinking of the splendid features and the even more splendid conduct of this unknown knight who wore the uniform of the Union army. "How I love him," she would whisper to herself; "but how he must despise me!" she would cry, and her pillow was often wet with tears of shame and mortification at her folly.

It was shortly after this episode that her parents had taken sick and passed away. Ella

ELLA IS RESCUED BY THE GENERAL

"With a few swift, powerful strokes, and with eyes purposely kept tight shut, he reached the side of the n—k—d drowning girl. Blushing deeply, he took off his blue army coat, fastened it around her, opened his eyes and swam with her to the shore."

ELLA IS RESCUED BY THE SEALMAN.

[illegible]

[illegible] and. Instantly, he took off his blue arm coat, fastened it round her, opened his eyes and swam with her to the shore."

had come East and had given up hope of ever seeing her rescuer again. You may imagine her feelings then when, on entering the drawing room at the van der Griffs', she discovered that the stranger who had so gallantly and tactfully rescued her from a watery grave was none other than General Ulysses S. Grant.

The poor girl was torn by a tumult of contrary emotions. Suppose he should remember her face. She blushed at the thought. And besides what chance had she to win such a great man's heart in competition with these society girls like Geraldine Rhinelander who had been "abroad" and spoke French.

At that moment one of the liveried servants approached the general with a trayful of filled wine glasses. So engrossed was the soldier hero in talking to Geraldine—or, rather, in listening to her alluring chatter—that he did not at first notice what was being offered him.

"Will you have a drink of champagne wine, General?" said Mrs. van der Griff who stood near.

The general raised his head and frowned as if he did not understand.

"Come, *mon General,*" cried Geraldine gayly, "We shall drink *à votre succès dans la guerre,*" and the flighty girl raised a glass of wine on high. Several of the guests crowded around and all were about to drink to the general's health.

"Stop," cried General Grant suddenly realizing what was being done, and something in the tone of his voice made everyone pause.

"Madam," said he, turning to Mrs. van der Griff, "Am I to understand that there is liquor in those glasses?"

"Why yes, General," said the hostess smiling uneasily. "It is just a little champagne wine."

"Madam," said the general, "It may be 'just champagne wine' to you, but 'just champagne wine' has ruined many a poor fellow and to me all alcoholic beverages are an abomination. I cannot consent, madam, to remain under your roof if they are to be served. I have never taken a drop—I have tried to

THE GENERAL REFUSES A DRINK

"'Stop!' said the General. 'I cannot consent to remain under your roof if alcoholic beverages are to be served. Wine and spirituous liquors have ruined many a poor fellow, and to me the very name of alcohol is an abomination.'"

[illegible] alcoholic liquors are to be served. [illegible] liquors [illegible] and every a poor family, and [illegible] the very name of alcohol is an abomination."

stamp it out of the army, and I owe it to my soldiers to decline to be a guest at a house where wine and liquor are served."

An excited buzz of comment arose as the general delivered this ultimatum. A few there were who secretly approved his sentiments, but they were far too few in numbers and constant indulgence in alcohol had weakened their wills so that they dared not stand forth. An angry flush appeared on the face of the hostess, for in society, "good form" is more important than courage and ideals, and by his frank statement General Grant had violently violated the canons of correct social etiquette.

"Very well, Mr. Grant," she said, stressing the "Mr."—"if that's the way you feel about it——"

"Stop," cried an unexpected voice, and to the amazement of all Ella Flowers stepped forward, her teeth clenched, her eyes blazing.

"Stop," she repeated, "He is right—the liquor evil is one of the worst curses of mod-

ern civilization, and if General Grant leaves, so do I."

Mrs. van der Griff hesitated for an instant, and then suddenly forced a smile.

"Why Ella dear, of course General Grant is right," said she, for it was well known in financial circles that her husband, Mr. van der Griff, had recently borrowed heavily from Ella's uncle. "There will not be a drop of wine served to-night, and now General, shall we go in to dinner? Will you be so kind as to lead the way with Miss Rhinelander?" The hostess had recovered her composure, and smiling sweetly at the guest of honor, gave orders to the servants to remove the wine glasses.

But General Grant did not hear her; he was looking at Ella Flowers. And as he gazed at the sweet beauty of her countenance he seemed to feel rising within him something which he had never felt before—something which made everything else seem petty and trivial. And as he looked into her eyes and she looked into his, he read her answer—the

only answer true womanhood can make to clean, worthy manhood.

"Shall we go *à la salle-à-manger?*" sounded a voice in his ears, and Geraldine's sinuous arm was thrust through his.

General Grant took the proffered talon and gently removed it from him.

"Miss Rhinelander," he said firmly, "I am taking this young lady as my partner," and suiting the action to the word, he graciously extended his arm to Ella who took it with a pretty blush.

It was General Grant's turn to blush when the other guests, with a few exceptions, applauded his choice loudly, and made way enthusiastically as the handsome couple advanced to the brilliantly lighted dining room.

But although the hostess had provided the most costly of viands, I am afraid that the brave general did not fully appreciate them, for in his soul was the joy of a strong man who has found his mate and in his heart was the singing of the eternal song, "I love her—I love her—I love her!"

It was only too apparent to the other guests what had happened and to their credit be it said that they heartily approved his choice, for Mrs. Rhinelander and her scheming daughter Geraldine had made countless enemies with their haughty manners, whereas the sweet simplicity of Ella Flowers had won her numerous friends. And all laughed merrily when General Grant, in his after dinner speech, said "flowers" instead of "flour" when speaking of provisioning the army—a slip which caused both the general and Miss Flowers to blush furiously, greatly to the delight of the good-natured guests. "All the world loves a lover"—truer words were never penned.

After dinner, while the other men, according to the usages of best society, were filling the air of the dining room with the fumes of nicotine, the general, who did not use tobacco, excused himself—amid many sly winks from the other men—and wandered out into the conservatory.

There he found Ella.

"General," she began.

"Miss Flowers," said the strong man simply, "Call me Ulysses."

And there let us leave them.

THE REVOLT OF THE OYSTER

A Humorous Sketch

BY DON MARQUIS

FROM "THE REVOLT OF THE OYSTER"

THE titanic struggle of Probably Arborial with the oyster who thought that he belonged in the van of evolutionary progress which accounts for ten little oyster shells on human toes, is one of Don Marquis's most grotesque and genial satires.

THE REVOLT OF THE OYSTER

"Our remote ancestor was probably arboreal."—*Eminent scientist.*

From his hut in the tree-top Probably Arboreal looked lazily down a broad vista, still strewn with fallen timber as the result of a whirlwind that had once played havoc in that part of the forest, toward the sea. Beyond the beach of hard white sand the water lay blue and vast and scarcely ruffled by the light morning wind. All the world and his wife were out fishing this fine day. Probably Arboreal could see dozens of people from where he crouched, splashing in the water or moving about the beach, and even hear their cries borne faintly to him on the breeze. They fished, for the most part, with their hands; and when one caught a fish it was his custom to eat it where he caught it, standing in the sea.

In Probably Arboreal's circle, one often bathed and breakfasted simultaneously; if a shark or saurian were too quick for one, one sometimes was breakfasted upon as one bathed.

In the hut next to Probably Arboreal, his neighbour, Slightly Simian, was having an argument with Mrs. Slightly, as usual. And, as usual, it concerned the

proper manner of bringing up the children. Probably listened with the bored distaste of a bachelor.

"I *will* slap his feet every time he picks things up with them!" screamed Slightly Simian's wife, an accredited shrew, in her shrill falsetto.

"It's *natural* for a child to use his feet that way," insisted the good-natured Slightly, "and I don't intend to have the boy punished for what's natural." Probably Arboreal grinned; he could fancy the expression on Old Sim's face as his friend made this characteristically plebeian plea.

"You can understand once for all, Slightly," said that gentleman's wife in a tone of finality, "that I intend to supervise the bringing-up of these children. Just because your people had neither birth nor breeding nor manners——"

"Mrs. S.!" broke in Slightly, with a warning in his voice. "Don't you work around to anything caudal, now, Mrs. S.! Or there'll be trouble. You get me?"

On one occasion Mrs. Slightly had twitted her spouse with the fact that his grandfather had a tail five inches long; she had never done so again. Slightly Simian himself, in his moments of excitement, picked things up with his feet, but like many other men of humble origin who have become personages in their maturity, he did not relish having such faults commented upon.

"Poor old Sim," mused Probably Arboreal, as he slid down the tree and ambled toward the beach, to be out of range of the family quarrel. "She married

him for his property, and now she's sore on him because there isn't more of it."

Nevertheless, in spite of the unpleasant effect of the quarrel, Probably found his mind dwelling upon matrimony that morning. A girl with bright red hair, into which she had tastefully braided a number of green parrot feathers, hit him coquettishly between the shoulder blades with a handful of wet sand and gravel as he went into the water. Ordinarily he would either have taken no notice at all of her, or else would have broken her wrist in a slow, dignified, manly sort of way. But this morning he grabbed her tenderly by the hair and sentimentally ducked her. When she was nearly drowned he released her. She came out of the water squealing with rage like a wild-cat and bit him on the shoulder.

"Parrot Feathers," he said to her, with an unwonted softness in his eyes, as he clutched her by the throat and squeezed, "beware how you trifle with a man's affections—some day I may take you seriously!"

He let the girl squirm loose, and she scrambled out upon the beach and threw shells and jagged pieces of flint at him, with an affectation of coyness. He chased her, caught her by the hair again, and scored the wet skin on her arms with a sharp stone, until she screamed with the pain, and as he did it he hummed an old love tune, for to-day there was an April gladness in his heart.

"Probably! Probably Arboreal!" He spun around to face the girl's father, Crooked Nose, who was contentedly munching a mullet.

"Probably," said Crooked Nose, "you are flirting with my daughter!"

"Father!" breathed the girl, ashamed of her parent's tactlessness. "How can you say that!"

"I want to know," said Crooked Nose, as sternly as a man can who is masticating mullet, "whether your intentions are serious and honourable."

"Oh, father!" said Parrot Feathers again. And putting her hands in front of her face to hide her blushes she ran off. Nevertheless, she paused when a dozen feet away and threw a piece of drift-wood at Probably Arboreal. It hit him on the shin, and as he rubbed the spot, watching her disappear into the forest, he murmured aloud, "Now, I wonder what she means by that!"

"Means," said Crooked Nose. "Don't be an ass, Probably! Don't pretend to *me* you don't know what the child means. You made her love you. You have exercised your arts of fascination on an innocent young girl, and now you have the nerve to wonder what she means. What'll you give me for her?"

"See here, Crooked Nose," said Probably, "don't bluster with me." His finer sensibilities were outraged. He did not intend to be *coerced* into matrimony by any father, even though he were pleased with that father's daughter. "I'm not buying any wives to-day, Crooked Nose."

"You have hurt her market value," said Crooked Nose, dropping his domineering air, and affecting a willingness to reason. "Those marks on her arms will not come off for weeks. And what man wants to marry

a scarred-up woman unless he has made the scars himself?"

"Crooked Nose," said Probably Arboreal, angry at the whole world because what might have been a youthful romance had been given such a sordid turn by this disgusting father, "if you don't go away I will scar every daughter you've got in your part of the woods. Do you get me?"

"I wish you'd look them over," said Crooked Nose. "You might do worse than marry all of them."

"I'll marry none of them!" cried Probably, in a rage, and turned to go into the sea again.

A heavy boulder hurtled past his head. He whirled about and discovered Crooked Nose in the act of recovering his balance after having flung it. He caught the old man half way between the beach and the edge of the forest. The clan, including Crooked Nose's four daughters, gathered round in a ring to watch the fight.

It was not much of a combat. When it was over, and the girls took hold of what remained of their late parent to drag him into the woods, Probably Arboreal stepped up to Parrot Feathers and laid his hand upon her arm.

"Feathers," he said, "now that there can be no question of coercion, will you and your sisters marry me?"

She turned toward him with a sobered face. Grief had turned her from a girl into a woman.

"Probably," she said, "you are only making this

offer out of generosity. It is not love that prompts it. I cannot accept. As for my sisters, they must speak for themselves."

"You are angry with me, Feathers?"

The girl turned sadly away. Probably watched the funeral cortège winding into the woods, and then went moodily back to the ocean. Now that she had refused him, he desired her above all things. But how to win her? He saw clearly that it could be no question of brute force. It had gone beyond that. If he used force with her, it must infallibly remind her of the unfortunate affair with her father. Some heroic action might attract her to him again. Prabably resolved to be a hero at the very earliest opportunity.

In the meantime he would breakfast. Breakfast had already been long delayed; and it was as true then, far back in the dim dawn of time, as it is now, that he who does not breakfast at some time during the day must go hungry to bed at night. Once more Probably Arboreal stepped into the ocean—stepped in without any premonition that he was to be a hero indeed; that he was chosen by Fate, by Destiny, by the Presiding Genius of this planet, by whatever force or intelligence you will, to champion the cause of all Mankind in a crucial struggle for human supremacy.

He waded into the water up to his waist, and bent forward with his arms beneath the surface, patiently waiting. It was thus that our remote ancestors fished. Fish ran larger in those days, as a rule. In the deeper waters they were monstrous. The smaller fish there-

fore sought the shallows where the big ones, greedy cannibals, could not follow them. A man seldom stood in the sea as Probably Arboreal was doing more than ten minutes without a fish brushing against him either accidentally or because the fish thought the man was something good to eat. As soon as a fish touched him, the man would grab for it. If he were clumsy and missed too many fish, he starved to death. Experts survived because they *were* expert; by a natural process of weeding out the awkward it had come about that men were marvellously adept. A bear who stands by the edge of a river watching for salmon at the time of the year when they run up stream to spawn, and scoops them from the water with a deft twitch of his paw, was not more quick or skillful than Probably Arboreal.

Suddenly he pitched forward, struggling; he gave a gurgling shout, and his head disappeared beneath the water.

When it came up again, he twisted toward the shore, with lashing arms and something like panic on his face, and shouted:

"Oh! Oh! Oh!" he cried. "Something has me by the foot!"

Twenty or thirty men and women who heard the cry stopped fishing and straightened up to look at him.

"Help! Help!" he shouted again. "It is pulling me out to sea!"

A knock-kneed old veteran, with long intelligent-looking mobile toes, broke from the surf and scurried to the safety of the beach, raising the cry:

"A god! A god! A water-god has caught Probably Arboreal!"

"More likely a devil!" cried Slightly Simian, who had followed Probably to the water.

And all his neighbours plunged to land and left Probably Arboreal to his fate, whatever his fate was to be. But since spectacles are always interesting, they sat down comfortably on the beach to see how long it would be before Probably Arboreal disappeared. Gods and devils, sharks and octopi, were forever grabbing one of their number and making off to deep water with him to devour him at their leisure. If the thing that dragged the man were seen, if it showed itself to be a shark or an octopus, a shark or an octopus it was; if it were unseen, it got the credit of being a god or a devil.

"Help me!" begged Probably Arboreal, who was now holding his own, although he was not able to pull himself into shallower water. "It is not a god or a devil. It doesn't feel like one. And it isn't a shark, because it hasn't any teeth. It is an animal like a cleft stick, and my foot is in the cleft."

But they did not help him. Instead, Big Mouth, a seer and *vers libre* poet of the day, smitten suddenly with an idea, raised a chant, and presently all the others joined in. The chant went like this:

"Probably, he killed Crooked Nose,
He killed him with his fists.
And Crooked Nose, he sent his ghost to sea

To catch his slayer by the foot!
The ghost of Crooked Nose will drown his slayer,
Drown, drown, drown his slayer,
The ghost of Crooked Nose will drown his slayer,
Drown his slayer in the sea!"

"You are a liar, Big Mouth!" spluttered Probably Arboreal, hopping on one foot and thrashing the water with his arms. "It is not a ghost; it is an animal."

But the chant kept up, growing louder and louder:

"The ghost of Crooked Nose will drown his slayer!
Drown, drown, drown his slayer,
Drown his slayer in the sea!"

Out of the woods came running more and more people at the noise of the chant. And as they caught what was going on, they took up the burden of it, until hundreds and thousands of them were singing it.

But, with a mighty turn and struggle, Probably Arboreal went under again, as to his head and body; his feet for an instant swished into the air, and everyone but Probably Arboreal himself saw what was hanging on to one of them.

It was neither ghost, shark, god, nor devil. It

was a monstrous oyster; a bull oyster, evidently. All oysters were much larger in those days than they are now, but this oyster was a giant, a mastodon, a mammoth among oysters, even for those days.

"It is an oyster, an oyster, an oyster!" cried the crowd, as Probably Arboreal's head and shoulders came out of the water again.

Big Mouth, the poet, naturally chagrined, and hating to yield up his dramatic idea, tried to raise another chant:

"The ghost of Crooked Nose went into an oyster,
The oyster caught his slayer by the foot
To drown, drown, drown him in the sea!"

But it didn't work. The world had seen that oyster, and had recognized it for an oyster.

"Oyster! Oyster! Oyster!" cried the crowd sternly at Big Mouth.

The bard tried to persevere, but Slightly Simian, feeling the crowd with him, advanced menacingly and said:

"See here, Big Mouth, we know a ghost when we see one, and we know an oyster! Yon animal is an oyster! You *sing* that it is an oyster, or shut up!"

"Ghost, ghost, ghost," chanted Big Mouth, tentatively. But he got no farther. Slightly Simian killed him with a club, and the matter was settled. Literary criticism was direct, straightforward, and effective in those days.

"But, oh, ye gods of the water, *what* an oyster!" cried Mrs. Slightly Simian.

And as the thought took them all, a silence fell over the multitude. They looked at the struggling man in a new community of idea. Oysters they had seen before, but never an oyster like this. Oysters they knew not as food; but they had always regarded them as rather ineffectual and harmless creatures. Yet this bold oyster was actually giving battle, and on equal terms, to a man! Were oysters henceforth to be added to the number of man's enemies? Were oysters about to attempt to conquer mankind? This oyster, was he the champion of the sea, sent up out of its depths, to grapple with mankind for supremacy?

Dimly, vaguely, as they watched the man attempt to pull the oyster ashore, and the oyster attempt to pull the man out to sea, some sense of the importance of this struggle was felt by mankind. Over forest, beach, and ocean hung the sense of momentous things. A haze passed across the face of the bright morning sun; the breeze died down; it was as if all nature held her breath at this struggle. And if mankind upon the land was interested, the sea was no less concerned. For, of a sudden, and as if by preconcerted signal, a hundred thousand oysters poked their heads above the surface of the waters and turned their eyes—they had small fiery opalescent eyes in those days—upon the combat.

At this appearance, mankind drew back with a gasp, but no word was uttered. The visible universe, perturbed earth and bending heavens alike, was tense and

dumb. On their part, the oysters made no attempt to go to the assistance of their champion. Nor did mankind leap to the rescue of Probably Arboreal. Tacitly, each side, in a spirit of fair play, agreed not to interfere; agreed to leave the combat to the champions; agreed to abide by the issue.

But while they were stirred and held by the sense of tremendous things impending, neither men nor oysters could be expected to understand definitely what almost infinite things depended upon this battle. There were no Darwins then. Evolution had not yet evolved the individual able to catch her at it.

But she was on her way. This very struggle was one of the crucial moments in the history of evolution. There have always been these critical periods when the two highest species in the world were about equal in intelligence, and it was touch and go as to which would survive and carry on the torch, and which species would lose the lead and become subservient. There have always been exact instants when the spirit of progress hesitated as between the forms of life, doubtful as to which one to make its representative.

Briefly, if the oyster conquered the man, more and more oysters, emboldened by this success, would prey upon men. Man, in the course of a few hundred thousand years, would become the creature of the oyster; the oyster's slave and food. Then the highest type of life on the planet would dwell in the sea. The civilization which was not yet would be a marine growth when it did come; the intellectual and spiritual and

physical supremacy held by the biped would pass over to the bivalve.

Thought could not frame this concept then; neither shellfish nor tree-dweller uttered it. But both the species felt it; they watched Probably Arboreal and the oyster with a strangling emotion, with a quivering intentness, that was none the less poignant because there was no Huxley or Spencer present to interpret it for them; they thrilled and sweat and shivered with the shaken universe, and the red sun through its haze peered down unwinking like the vast bloodshot eye of life.

An hour had passed by in silence except for the sound of the battle, more and more men and more and more oysters had gathered about the scene of the struggle; the strain was telling on both champions. Probably Arboreal had succeeded in dragging the beast some ten feet nearer the shore, but the exertion had told upon him; he was growing tired; he was breathing with difficulty; he had swallowed a great deal of salt water. He too was dimly conscious of the importance of this frightful combat; he felt himself the representative of the human race. He was desperate but cool; he saved his breath; he opposed to the brute force of the oyster the cunning of a man. But he was growing weaker; he felt it.

If only those for whom he was fighting would fling him some word of encouragement! He was too proud to ask it, but he felt bitterly that he was not supported, for he could not realize what emotion had smitten

dumb his fellow men. He had got to the place where a word of spiritual comfort and encouragement would have meant as much as fifty pounds of weight in his favour.

He had, in fact, arrived at the Psychological Moment. There were no professing psychologists then; but there was psychology; and it worked itself up into moments even as it does to-day.

Probably Arboreal's head went under the water, tears and salt ocean mingled nauseatingly in his mouth.

"I am lost," he gurgled.

But at that instant a shout went up—the shrill, high cry of a woman. Even in his agony he recognized that voice—the voice of Parrot Feathers! With a splendid rally he turned his face toward the shore.

She was struggling through the crowd, fighting her way to the front rank with the fury of a wildcat. She had just buried her father, and the earth was still dark and damp upon her hands, but the magnificent creature had only one thought now. She thought only of her lover, her heroic lover; in her nobility of soul she had been able to rise above the pettiness of spirit which another woman might have felt; she knew no pique or spite. Her lover was in trouble, and her place was nigh him; so she flung a false maidenly modesty to the winds and acknowledged him and cheered him on, careless of what the assembled world might think.

She arrived at the Psychological Moment.

"Probably! Probably!" she cried. "Don't give up! Don't give up! For my sake!"

For her sake! The words were like fire in the veins of the struggling hero. He made another bursting effort, and gained a yard. But the rally had weakened him; the next instant his head went under the water once more. Would it ever appear again? There was a long, long moment, while all mankind strangled and gasped in sympathetic unison, and then our hero's dripping head did emerge. It had hit a stone under water, and it was bleeding, but it emerged. One eye was nearly closed.

"Watch him! Watch him!" shouted Parrot Feathers. "Don't let him do that again! When he has you under water he whacks your eye with his tail. He's trying to blind you!"

And, indeed, these seemed to be the desperate oyster's tactics. If he could once destroy our hero's sight, the end would soon come.

"Probably—do you hear me?"

He nodded his head; he was beyond speech.

"Take a long breath and dive! Do you get me? Dive! Dive at your own feet! Grab your feet in your hands and roll under water in a bunch! Roll toward the beach!"

It was a desperate manœuvre, especially for a man who had already been under water so much that morning. But the situation was critical and called for the taking of big chances. It would either succeed—or fail. And death was no surer if it failed than if he waited. Probably Arboreal ceased to think; he yielded up his reasoning powers to the noble and courageous

woman on the sand; he dived and grabbed his feet and rolled.

"Again! Again!" she cried. "Another long breath and roll again!"

Her bosom heaved, as if she were actually breathing for him. To Probably Arboreal, now all but drowned, and almost impervious to feeling, it also seemed as if he were breathing with her lungs; and yet he hardly dared to dive and roll again. He struggled in the water and stared at her stupidly.

She sent her unusual and electric personality thrilling into him across the intervening distance; she held him with her eyes, and filled him with her spirit.

"Roll!" she commanded. "Probably! Roll!"

And under the lash of her courage, he rolled again. Three more times he rolled . . . and then . . . unconscious, but still breathing, he was in her arms.

As he reached the land half a million oysters sank into the sea in the silence of defeat and despair, while from the beaches rose a mighty shout.

The sun, as if it gestured, flung the mists from its face, and beamed benignly.

"Back! Back! Give him air!" cried Parrot Feathers, as she addressed herself to the task of removing the oyster from his foot.

The giant beast was dying, and its jaws were locked in the rigour of its suffering. There was no way to remove it gently. Parrot Feathers laid her unconscious hero's foot upon one rock, and broke the oyster loose with another.

Incidentally she smashed Probably Arboreal's toe.

He sat up in pained surprise. Unthinkingly, as you or I would put a hurt finger into our mouths, he put his crushed toe into his mouth. At that period of man's history the trick was not difficult. And then——

A beatific smile spread over his face!

Man had tasted the oyster!

In half an hour, mankind was plunging into the waves searching for oysters. The oyster's doom was sealed. His monstrous pretension that he belonged in the van of evolutionary progress was killed forever. He had been tasted, and found food. He would never again battle for supremacy. Meekly he yielded to his fate. He is food to this day.

Parrot Feathers and Probably Arboreal were married after breakfast. On the toes of their first child were ten cunning, diminutive oyster shells. Mankind, up to that time, had had sharp toenails like the claws of birds. But the flat, shell-like toenails, the symbols of man's triumph over, and trampling down of, the oyster were inherited from the children of this happy couple.

They persist to this day.

"SPEAKING OF OPERATIONS—"

A HUMOROUS STORY BY

Irvin S. Cobb

EVERYBODY who has had an operation or who knows a friend who has had one, treasures Mr. Cobb's hilarious odyssey through the hospital.

RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED
TO TWO CLASSES:

THOSE WHO HAVE ALREADY BEEN OPERATED ON
THOSE WHO HAVE NOT YET BEEN OPERATED ON

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Mainly My Own

"Speaking of Operations—"

NOW that the last belated bill for services professionally rendered has been properly paid and properly receipted; now that the memory of the event, like the mark of the stitches, has faded out from a vivid red to a becoming pink shade; now that I pass a display of adhesive tape in a drug-store window without flinching—I sit me down to write a little piece about a certain matter—a small thing, but mine own—to wit, That Operation.

For years I have noticed that persons who underwent pruning or remodeling at the hands of a duly qualified surgeon, and survived, like to talk about it afterward. In the event of their not surviving I have no doubt they still liked to talk about it, but in a different locality. Of all the readily available topics for use, whether among friends or among strangers, an operation seems to be the handiest and most dependable. It beats the Tariff, or Roosevelt, or Bryan, or when this war is going to end, if ever, if you are a man talking to

other men; and it is more exciting even than the question of how Mrs. Vernon Castle will wear her hair this season, if you are a woman talking to other women.

For mixed companies a whale is one of the best and the easiest things to talk about that I know of. In regard to whales and their peculiarities you can make almost any assertion without fear of successful contradiction. Nobody ever knows any more about them than you do. You are not hampered by facts. If someone mentions the blubber of the whale and you chime in and say it may be noticed for miles on a still day when the large but emotional creature has been moved to tears by some great sorrow coming into its life, everybody is bound to accept the statement. For after all how few among us really know whether a distressed whale sobs aloud or does so under its breath? Who, with any certainty, can tell whether a mother whale hatches her own egg her own self or leaves it on the sheltered bosom of a fjord to be incubated by the gentle warmth of the midnight sun? The possibilities of the propo-

sition for purposes of informal debate, pro and con, are apparent at a glance.

The weather, of course, helps out amazingly when you are meeting people for the first time, because there is nearly always more or less weather going on somewhere and practically everybody has ideas about it. The human breakfast is also a wonderfully good topic to start up during one of those lulls. Try it yourself the next time the conversation seems to drag. Just speak up in an offhand kind of way and say that you never care much about breakfast—a slice of toast and a cup of weak tea start you off properly for doing a hard day's work. You will be surprised to note how things liven up and how eagerly all present join in. The lady on your left feels that you should know she always takes two lumps of sugar and nearly half cream, because she simply cannot abide hot milk, no matter what the doctors say. The gentleman on your right will be moved to confess he likes his eggs boiled for exactly three minutes, no more and no less. Buckwheat cakes and sausage find a champion

and oatmeal rarely lacks a warm defender.

But after all, when all is said and done, the king of all topics is operations. Sooner or later, wherever two or more are gathered together it is reasonably certain that somebody will bring up an operation.

Until I passed through the experience of being operated on myself, I never really realized what a precious conversational boon the subject is, and how great a part it plays in our intercourse with our fellow beings on this planet. To the teller it is enormously interesting, for he is not only the hero of the tale but the rest of the cast and the stage setting as well—the whole show, as they say; and if the listener has had a similar experience—and who is there among us in these days that has not taken a nap 'neath the shade of the old ether cone?—it acquires a doubled value.

"Speaking of operations ——" you say, just like that, even though nobody present has spoken of them; and then you are off, with your new acquaintance sitting on the edge of his chair, or hers as the case may be and so frequently is, with hands clutched

in polite but painful restraint, gills working up and down with impatience, eyes brightened with desire, tongue hung in the middle, waiting for you to pause to catch your breath, so that he or she may break in with a few personal recollections along the same line. From a mere conversation it resolves itself into a symptom symposium, and a perfectly splendid time is had by all.

If an operation is such a good thing to talk about, why isn't it a good thing to write about, too? That is what I wish to know. Besides, I need the money. Verily, one always needs the money when one has but recently escaped from the ministering clutches of the modern hospital. Therefore I write.

It all dates back to the fair, bright morning when I went to call on a prominent practitioner here in New York, whom I shall denominate as Doctor X. I had a pain. I had had it for days. It was not a dependable, locatable pain, such as a tummyache or a toothache is, which you can put your hand on; but an indefinite,

unsettled, undecided kind of pain, which went wandering about from place to place inside of me like a strange ghost lost in Cudjo's Cave. I never knew until then what the personal sensations of a haunted house are. If only the measly thing could have made up its mind to settle down somewhere and start light housekeeping I think I should have been better satisfied. I never had such an uneasy tenant. Alongside of it a woman with the moving fever would be comparatively a fixed and stationary object.

Having always, therefore, enjoyed perfectly riotous and absolutely unbridled health, never feeling weak and distressed unless dinner happened to be ten or fifteen minutes late, I was green regarding physicians and the ways of physicians. But I knew Doctor X slightly, having met him last summer in one of his hours of ease in the grand stand at a ball game, when he was expressing a desire to cut the umpire's throat from ear to ear, free of charge; and I remembered his name, and remembered, too, that he had impressed me at the time

as being a person of character and decision and scholarly attainments.

He wore whiskers. Somehow in my mind whiskers are ever associated with medical skill. I presume this is a heritage of my youth, though I believe others labor under the same impression. As I look back it seems to me that in childhood's days all the doctors in our town wore whiskers.

I recall one old doctor down there in Kentucky who was practically lurking in ambush all the time. All he needed was a few decoys out in front of him and a pump gun to be a duck blind. He carried his calomel about with him in a fruit jar, and when there was a cutting job he stropped his scalpel on his bootleg.

You see, in those primitive times germs had not been invented yet, and so he did not have to take any steps to avoid them. Now we know that loose, luxuriant whiskers are unsanitary, because they make such fine winter quarters for germs; so, though the doctors still wear whiskers, they do not wear them wild and waving. In the profession bosky whiskers are taboo; they must

be landscaped. And since it is a recognized fact that germs abhor orderliness and straight lines they now go elsewhere to reside, and the doctor may still retain his traditional aspect and yet be practically germproof. Doctor X was trimmed in accordance with the ethics of the newer school. He had trellis whiskers. So I went to see him at his offices in a fashionable district, on an expensive side street.

Before reaching him I passed through the hands of a maid and a nurse, each of whom spoke to me in a low, sorrowful tone of voice, which seemed to indicate that there was very little hope.

I reached an inner room where Doctor X was. He looked me over, while I described for him as best I could what seemed to be the matter with me, and asked me a number of intimate questions touching on the lives, works, characters and peculiarities of my ancestors; after which he made me stand up in front of him and take my coat off, and he punched me hither and yon with his forefinger. He also knocked repeatedly on my breastbone with his

knuckles, and each time, on doing this, would apply his ear to my chest and listen intently for a spell, afterward shaking his head in a disappointed way. Apparently there was nobody at home. For quite a time he kept on knocking, but without getting any response.

He then took my temperature and fifteen dollars, and said it was an interesting case —not unusual exactly, but interesting—and that it called for an operation.

From the way my heart and other organs jumped inside of me at that statement I knew at once that, no matter what he may have thought, the premises were not unoccupied. Naturally I inquired how soon he meant to operate. Personally I trusted there was no hurry about it. I was perfectly willing to wait for several years, if necessary. He smiled at my ignorance.

"I never operate," he said; "operating is entirely out of my line. I am a diagnostician."

He was, too—I give him full credit for that. He was a good, keen, close diagnostician. How did he know I had only fifteen

dollars on me? You did not have to tell this man what you had, or how much. He knew without being told.

I asked whether he was acquainted with Doctor Y—Y being a person whom I had met casually at a club to which I belong. Oh, yes, he said, he knew Doctor Y. Y was a clever man, X said—very, very clever; but Y specialized in the eyes, the ears, the nose and the throat. I gathered from what Doctor X said that any time Doctor Y ventured below the thorax he was out of bounds and liable to be penalized; and that if by any chance he strayed down as far as the lungs he would call for help and back out as rapidly as possible.

This was news to me. It would appear that these up-to-date practitioners just go ahead and divide you up and partition you out among themselves without saying anything to you about it. Your torso belongs to one man and your legs are the exclusive property of his brother practitioner down on the next block, and so on. You may belong to as many as half a dozen specialists, most of whom, very possibly, are total

strangers to you, and yet never know a thing about it yourself.

It has rather the air of trespass—nay, more than that, it bears some of the aspects of unlawful entry—but I suppose it is legal. Certainly, judging by what I am able to learn, the system is being carried on generally. So it must be ethical.

Anything doctors do in a mass is ethical. Almost anything they do singly and on individual responsibility is unethical. Being ethical among doctors is practically the same thing as being a Democrat in Texas or a Presbyterian in Scotland.

"Y will never do for you," said Doctor X, when I had rallied somewhat from the shock of these disclosures. "I would suggest that you go to Doctor Z, at such-and-such an address. You are exactly in Z's line. I'll let him know that you are coming and when, and I'll send him down my diagnosis."

So that same afternoon, the appointment having been made by telephone, I went, full of quavery emotions, to Doctor Z's place. As soon as I was inside his outer hallway

I realized that I was nearing the presence of one highly distinguished in his profession.

A pussy-footed male attendant, in a livery that made him look like a cross between a headwater and an undertaker's assistant, escorted me through an anteroom into a reception-room, where a considerable number of well-dressed men and women were sitting about in strained attitudes, pretending to read magazines while they waited their turns, but in reality furtively watching one another.

I sat down in a convenient chair, adhering fast to my hat and my umbrella. They were the only friends I had there and I was determined not to lose them without a struggle. On the wall were many colored charts showing various portions of the human anatomy and what ailed them. Directly in front of me was a very thrilling illustration, evidently copied from an oil painting, of a liver in a bad state of repair. I said to myself that if I had a liver like that one I should keep it hidden from the public eye—I would never permit it to sit

for its portrait. Still, there is no accounting for tastes. I know a man who got his spleen back from the doctors and now keeps it in a bottle of alcohol on the what-not in the parlor, as one of his most treasured possessions, and sometimes shows it to visitors. He, however, is of a very saving disposition.

Presently a lady secretary, who sat behind a roll-top desk in a corner of the room, lifted a forefinger and silently beckoned me to her side. I moved over and sat down by her; she took down my name and my age and my weight and my height, and a number of other interesting facts that will come in very handy should anyone ever be moved to write a complete history of my early life. In common with Doctor X she shared one attribute—she manifested a deep curiosity regarding my forefathers—wanted to know all about them. I felt that this was carrying the thing too far. I felt like saying to her:

"Miss or madam, so far as I know there is nothing the matter with my ancestors of the second and third generations back, ex-

cept that they are dead. I am not here to seek medical assistance for a grandparent who succumbed to diasppointment that time when Samuel J. Tilden got counted out, or for a great-grandparent who entered into Eternal Rest very unexpectedly and in a manner entirely uncalled for as a result of being an innocent bystander in one of those feuds that were so popular in my native state immediately following the Mexican War. Leave my ancestors alone. There is no need of your shaking my family tree in the belief that a few overripe patients will fall out. I alone—I, me, myself —am the present candidate!"

However, I refrained from making this protest audibly. I judged she was only going according to the ritual; and as she had a printed card, with blanks in it ready to be filled out with details regarding the remote members of the family connection, I humored her along.

When I could not remember something she wished to know concerning an ancestor I supplied her with thrilling details culled from the field of fancy. When the card

was entirely filled up she sent me back to my old place to wait. I waited and waited, breeding fresh ailments all the time. I had started out with one symptom; now if I had one I had a million and a half. I could feel goose flesh sprouting out all over me. If I had been taller I might have had more, but not otherwise. Such is the power of the human imagination when the surroundings are favorable to its development.

Time passed; to me it appeared that nearly all the time there was passed and that we were getting along toward the shank-end of the Christian era mighty fast. I was afraid my turn would come next and afraid it would not. Perhaps you know this sensation. You get it at the dentist's, and when you are on the list of after-dinner speakers at a large banquet, and when you are waiting for the father of the Only Girl in the World to make up his mind whether he is willing to try to endure you as a son-in-law.

Then some more time passed.

One by one my companions, obeying a

command, passed out through the door at the back, vanishing out of my life forever. None of them returned. I was vaguely wondering whether Doctor Z buried his dead on the premises or had them removed by a secret passageway in the rear, when a young woman in a nurse's costume tapped me on the shoulder from behind.

I jumped. She hid a compassionate smile with her hand and told me that the doctor would see me now.

As I rose to follow her—still clinging with the drowning man's grip of desperation to my hat and my umbrella—I was astonished to note by a glance at the calendar on the wall that this was still the present date. I thought it would be Thursday of next week at the very least.

Doctor Z also wore whiskers, carefully pointed up by an expert hedge trimmer. He sat at his desk, surrounded by freewill offerings from grateful patients and by glass cases containing other things he had taken away from them when they were not in a condition to object. I had expected, after all the preliminary ceremonies and

delays, that we should have a long séance together. Not so; not at all. The modern expert in surgery charges as much for remembering your name between visits as the family doctor used to expect for staying up all night with you, but he does not waste any time when you are in his presence.

I was about to find that out. And a little later on I was to find out a lot of other things; in fact, that whole week was of immense educational value to me.

I presume it was because he stood so high in his profession, and was almost constantly engaged in going into the best society that Doctor Z did not appear to be the least bit excited over my having picked him out to look into me. In the most perfunctory manner he shook the hand that has shaken the hands of Jess Willard, George M. Cohan and Henry Ford, and bade me be seated in a chair which was drawn up in a strong light, where he might gaze directly at me as we conversed and so get the full values of the composition. But if I was a treat for him to look at he concealed his feelings very effectually.

He certainly had his emotions under splendid control. But then, of course, you must remember that he probably had traveled about extensively and was used to sight-seeing.

From this point on everything passed off in a most businesslike manner. He reached into a filing cabinet and took out an exhibit, which I recognized as the same one his secretary had filled out in the early part of the century. So I was already in the card-index class. Then briefly he looked over the manifest that Doctor X had sent him. It may not have been a manifest—it may have been an invoice or a bill of lading. Anyhow, I was in the assignee's hands. I could only hope it would not eventually become necessary to call in a receiver. Then he spoke:

"Yes, yes-yes," he said; "yes-yes-yes! Operation required. Small matter—hum, hum! Let's see—this is Tuesday? Quite so. Do it Friday! Friday at"—he glanced toward a scribbled pad of engagement dates at his elbow—"Friday at seven A. M.

No; make it seven-fifteen. Have important tumor case at seven. St. Germicide's Hospital. You know the place?—up on Umpty-umph Street. Go' day! Miss Whoziz, call next visitor."

And before I realized that practically the whole affair had been settled I was outside the consultation-room in a small private hall, and the secretary was telling me further details would be conveyed to me by mail. I went home in a dazed state. For the first time I was beginning to learn something about an industry in which heretofore I had never been interested. Especially was I struck by the difference now revealed to me in the preliminary stages of the surgeons' business as compared with their fellow experts in the allied cutting trades—tailors, for instance, not to mention barbers. Every barber, you know, used to be a surgeon, only he spelled it chirurgeon. Since then the two professions have drifted far apart. Even a half-witted barber—the kind who always has the first chair as you come into the shop—can easily spend ten minutes of your time thinking of things he

thinks you should have and mentioning them to you one by one, whereas any good, live surgeon knows what you have almost instantly.

As for the tailor—consider how wearisome are his methods when you parallel them alongside the tremendous advances in this direction made by the surgeon—how cumbersome and old-fashioned and tedious! Why, an experienced surgeon has you all apart in half the time the tailor takes up in deciding whether the vest shall fasten with five buttons or six. Our own domestic tailors are bad enough in this regard and the Old World tailors are even worse.

I remember a German tailor in Aix-la-Chapelle in the fall of 1914 who undertook to build for me a suit suitable for visiting the battle lines informally. He was the most literary tailor I ever met anywhere. He would drape the material over my person and then take a piece of chalk and write quite a nice long piece on me. Then he would rub it out and write it all over again, but more fully. He kept this

up at intervals of every other day until he had writer's cramp. After that he used pins. He would pin the seams together, uttering little soothing, clucking sounds in German whenever a pin went through the goods and into me. The German cluck is not so soothing as the cluck of the English-speaking peoples, I find.

At the end of two long and trying weeks, which wore both of us down noticeably, he had the job done. It was not an unqualified success. He regarded it as a suit of clothes, but I knew better; it was a set of slip covers, and if only I had been a two-seated runabout it would have proved a perfect fit, I am sure; but I am a single-seated design and it did not answer. I wore it to the war because I had nothing else to wear that would stamp me as a regular war correspondent, except, of course, my wrist watch; but I shall not wear it to another war. War is terrible enough already; and, besides, I have parted with it. On my way home through Holland I gave that suit to a couple of poor Belgian refugees, and I presume they are still wearing it.

So far as I have been able to observe, the surgeons and the tailors of these times share but one common instinct: If you go to a new surgeon or to a new tailor he is morally certain, after looking you over, that the last surgeon you had, or the last tailor, did not do your cutting properly. There, however, is where the resemblance ends. The tailor, as I remarked in effect just now, wants an hour at least in which to decide how he may best cover up and disguise the irregularities of the human form; in much less time than that the surgeon has completely altered the form itself.

With the surgeon it is very much as it is with those learned men who write those large, impressive works of reference which should be permanently in every library, and which we are forever buying from an agent because we are so passionately addicted to payments. If the thing he seeks does not appear in the contents proper he knows exactly where to look for it. "See appendix," says the historian to you in a footnote. "See appendix," says the surgeon

to himself, the while humming a cheery refrain. And so he does.

Well, I went home. This was Tuesday and the operation was not to be performed until the coming Friday. By Wednesday I had calmed down considerably. By Thursday morning I was practically normal again as regards my nerves. You will understand that I was still in a state of blissful ignorance concerning the actual methods of the surgical profession as exemplified by its leading exponents of today. The knowledge I have touched on in the pages immediately preceding was to come to me later.

Likewise Doctor Z's manner had been deceiving. It could not be that he meant to carve me to any really noticeable extent —his attitude had been entirely too casual. At our house carving is a very serious matter. Any time I take the head of the table and start in to carve it is fitting to remove the women and children to a place of safety, and onlookers should get under the table. When we first began housekeeping and gave our first small dinner-party we had

a brace of ducks cooked in honor of the company, and I, as host, undertook to carve them. I never knew until then that a duck was built like a watch—that his works were inclosed in a burglarproof case. Without the use of dynamite the Red Leary-O'Brien gang could not have broken into those ducks. I thought so then and I think so yet. Years have passed since then, but I may state that even now, when there are guests for dinner, we do not have ducks. Unless somebody else is going to carve, we have liver.

I mention this fact in passing because it shows that I had learned to revere carving as one of the higher arts, and one not to be approached except in a spirit of due appreciation of the magnitude of the undertaking, and after proper consideration and thought and reflection, and all that sort of thing.

If this were true as regards a mere duck, why not all the more so as regards the carving of a person of whom I am so very fond as I am of myself? Thus I reasoned. And finally, had not Doctor Z spoken of the

coming operation as a small matter? Well then?

Thursday at noon I received from Doctor Z's secretary a note stating that arrangements had been made for my admission into St. Germicide that same evening and that I was to spend the night there. This hardly seemed necessary. Still, the tone of the note appeared to indicate that the hospital authorities particularly wished to have me for an overnight guest; and as I reflected that probably the poor things had few enough bright spots in their busy lives, I decided I would humor them along and gladden the occasion with my presence from dinner-time on.

About eight o'clock I strolled in very jauntily. In my mind I had the whole programme mapped out. I would stay at the hospital for, say, two days following the operation—or, at most, three. Then I must be up and away. I had a good deal of work to do and a number of people to see on important business, and I could not really afford to waste more than a week-end on the staff of St. Germicide's. After Monday

they must look to their own devices for social entertainment. That was my idea. Now when I look back on it I laugh, but it is a hollow laugh and there is no real merriment in it.

Indeed, almost from the moment of my entrance little things began to come up that were calculated to have a depressing effect on one's spirits. Downstairs a serious-looking lady met me and entered in a book a number of salient facts regarding my personality which the previous investigators had somehow overlooked. There is a lot of bookkeeping about an operation. This detail attended to, a young man, dressed in white garments and wearing an expression that stamped him as one who had suffered a recent deep bereavement, came and relieved me of my hand bag and escorted me upstairs.

As we passed through the upper corridors I had my first introduction to the hospital smell, which is a smell compounded of iodoform, ether, gruel, and something boiling. All hospitals have it,

I understand. In time you get used to it, but you never really care for it.

The young man led me into a small room tastefully decorated with four walls, a floor, a ceiling, a window sill and a window, a door and a doorsill, and a bed and a chair. He told me to go to bed. I did not want to go to bed—it was not my regular bed-time—but he made a point of it, and I judged it was according to regulations; so I undressed and put on my night clothes and crawled in. He left me, taking my other clothes and my shoes with him, but I was not allowed to get lonely.

A little later a ward surgeon appeared, to put a few inquiries of a pointed and personal nature. He particularly desired to know what my trouble was. I explained to him that I couldn't tell him—he would have to see Doctor X or Doctor Z; they probably knew, but were keeping it a secret between themselves.

The answer apparently satisfied him, because immediately after that he made me sign a paper in which I assumed all responsibility for what was to take place the next morning.

This did not seem exactly fair. As I pointed out to him, it was the surgeon's affair, not mine; and if the surgeon made a mistake the joke would be on him and not on me, because in that case I would not be here anyhow. But I signed, as requested, on the dotted line, and he departed.

After that, at intervals, the chief house surgeon dropped in, without knocking, and the head nurse came, and an interne or so, and a ward nurse, and the special nurse who was to have direct charge of me. It dawned on me that I was not having any more privacy in that hospital than a goldfish.

About eleven o'clock an orderly came, and, without consulting my wishes in the matter, he undressed me until I could have passed almost anywhere for September Morn's father, and gave me a clean shave, twice over, on one of my most prominent plane surfaces. I must confess I enjoyed that part of it. So far as I am able to recall, it was the only shave I have ever had where the operator did not spray me

with cheap perfumery afterward and then try to sell me a bottle of hair tonic.

Having shaved me, the young man did me up amidships in a neat cloth parcel, took his kit under his arm and went away.

It occurred to me that, considering the trivial nature of the case, a good deal of fuss was being made over me by persons who could have no personal concern in the matter whatsoever. This thought recurred to me frequently as I lay there, all tied in a bundle like a week's washing. I did not feel quite so uppish as I had felt. Why was everybody picking on me?

Anon I slept, but dreamed fitfully. I dreamed that a whole flock of surgeons came to my bedside and charted me out in sections, like one of those diagram pictures you see of a beef in the Handy Compendium of Universal Knowledge, showing the various cuts and the butcher's pet name for each cut. Each man took his favorite joint and carried it away, and when they were all gone I was merely a recent site, full of reverberating echoes and nothing else.

I have had happier dreams in my time; this was not the kind of dream I should have selected had the choice been left to me.

When I woke the young sun was shining in at the window, and an orderly—not the orderly who had shaved me, but another one—was there in my room and my nurse was waiting outside the door. The orderly dressed me in a quaint suit of pyjamas cut on the half shell and buttoning stylishly in the back, *princesse mode.* Then he rolled in a flat litter on wheels and stretched me on it, and covered me up with a white table-cloth, just as though I had been cold Sunday-night supper, and we started for the operating-room at the top of the building; but before we started I lit a large black cigar, as Gen. U. S. Grant used to do when he went into battle. I wished by this to show how indifferent I was. Maybe he fooled somebody, but I do not believe I possess the same powers of simulation that Grant had. He must have been a very remarkable man—Grant must.

The orderly and the nurse trundled me

out into the hall and loaded me into an elevator, which was to carry us up to the top of the hospital. Several other nurses were already in the elevator. As we came aboard one of them remarked that it was a fine day. A fine day for what? She did not finish the sentence.

Everybody wore a serious look. Inside of myself I felt pretty serious too—serious enough for ten or twelve. I had meant to fling off several very bright, spontaneous quips on the way to the table. I thought them out in advance, but now, somehow, none of them seemed appropriate. Instinctively, as it were, I felt that humor was out of place here.

I never knew an elevator to progress from the third floor of a building to the ninth with such celerity as this one on which we were traveling progressed. Personally I was in no mood for haste. If there was anyone else in all that great hospital who was in a particular hurry to be operated on I was perfectly willing to wait. But alas, no! The mechanism of the elevator was in perfect order—entirely too

perfect. No accident of any character whatsoever befell us en route, no dropping back into the basement with a low, grateful thud; no hitch; no delay of any kind. We were certainly out of luck that trip. The demon of a joyrider who operated the accursed device jerked a lever and up we soared at a distressingly high rate of speed. If I could have had my way about that youth he would have been arrested for speeding.

Now we were there! They rolled me into a large room, all white, with a rounded ceiling like the inside of an egg. Right away I knew what the feelings of a poor, lonely little yolk are when the spoon begins to chip the shell. If I had not been so busy feeling sorry for myself I think I might have developed quite an active sympathy for yolks.

My impression had been that this was to be in the nature of a private affair, without invitations. I was astonished to note that quite a crowd had assembled for the opening exercises. From his attire and general deportment I judged that Doctor

Z was going to be the master of the revels, he being attired appropriately in a white domino, with rubber gloves and a fancy cap of crash toweling. There were present, also, my diagnostic friend, Doctor X, likewise in fancy-dress costume, and a surgeon I had never met. From what I could gather he was going over the course behind Doctor Z to replace the divots.

And there was an interne in the background, playing caddy, as it were, and a head nurse, who was going to keep the score, and two other nurses, who were going to help her keep it. I only hoped that they would show no partiality, but be as fair to me as they were to Doctor Z, and that he would go round in par.

So they placed me right where my eyes might rest on a large wall cabinet full of very shiny-looking tools; and they took my cigar away from me and folded my hands on the wide bowknot of my sash. Then they put a cloth dingus over my face and a voice of authority told me to breathe. That advice, however, was superfluous and might just as well have been omitted, for

such was my purpose anyhow. Ever since I can recall anything at all, breathing has been a regular habit with me. So I breathed. And, at that, a bottle of highly charged sarsaparilla exploded somewhere in the immediate vicinity and most of its contents went up my nose.

I started to tell them that somebody had been fooling with their ether and adulterating it, and that if they thought they could send me off to sleep with soda pop they were making the mistake of their lives, because it just naturally could not be done; but for some reason or other I decided to put off speaking about the matter for a few minutes. I breathed again—again—agai——

I was going away from there. I was in a large gas balloon, soaring up into the clouds. How pleasant! . . . No, by Jove! I was not in a balloon—I myself was the balloon, which was not quite so pleasant. Besides, Doctor Z was going along as a passenger; and as we traveled up and up he kept jabbing me in the midriff with the ferrule of a large umbrella which he had

brought along with him in case of rain. He jabbed me harder and harder. I remonstrated with him. I told him I was a bit tender in that locality and the ferrule of his umbrella was sharp. He would not listen. He kept on jabbing me. . . .

Something broke! We started back down to earth. We fell faster and faster. We fell nine miles, and after that I began to get used to it. Then I saw the earth beneath and it was rising up to meet us.

A town was below—a town that grew larger and larger as we neared it. I could make out the bonded indebtedness, and the Carnegie Library, and the moving-picture palaces, and the new dancing parlor, and other principal points of interest.

At the rate we were falling we were certainly going to make an awful splatter in that town when we hit. I was sorry for the street-cleaning department.

We fell another half mile or so. A spire was sticking up into the sky directly beneath us, like a spear, to impale us. By a supreme effort I twisted out of the way of that spire, only to strike squarely on top of

the roof of a greenhouse back of the parsonage, next door. We crashed through it with a perfectly terrific clatter of breaking glass and landed in a bed of white flowers, all soft and downy, like feathers.

And then Doctor Z stood up and combed the débris out of his whiskers and remarked that, taking it by and large, it had been one of the pleasantest little outings he had enjoyed in the entire course of his practice. He said that as a patient I was fair, but as a balloon I was immense. He asked me whether I had seen anything of his umbrella and began looking round for it. I tried to help him look, but I was too tired to exert myself much. I told him I believed I would take a little nap.

I opened a dizzy eye part way. So this was heaven—this white expanse that swung and swam before my languid gaze? No, it could not be—it did not smell like heaven. It smelled like a hospital. It was a hospital. It was my hospital. My nurse was bending over me and I caught a faint whiff of the starch in the front of her crisp blue blouse. She was two-headed for the mo-

ment, but that was a mere detail. She settled a pillow under my head and told me to lie quiet.

I meant to lie quiet; I did not have to be told. I wanted to lie quiet and hurt. I was hurty from head to toe and back again, and crosswise and cater-cornered. I hurt diagonally and lengthwise and on the bias. I had a taste in my mouth like a bird-and-animal store. And empty! It seemed to me those doctors had not left anything inside of me except the acoustics. Well, there was a mite of consolation there. If the overhauling had been as thorough as I had reason to believe it was from my present sensations, I need never fear catching anything again so long as I lived, except possibly dandruff.

I waved the nurse away. I craved solitude. I desired only to lie there in that bed and hurt—which I did.

I had said beforehand I meant to stay in St. Germicide's for two or three days only. It is when I look back on that resolution I emit the hollow laugh elsewhere referred to. For exactly four weeks I was flat on

my back. I know now how excessively wearied a man can get of his own back, how tired of it, how bored with it! And after that another two weeks elapsed before my legs became the same dependable pair of legs I had known in the past.

I did not want to eat at first, and when I did begin to want to they would not let me. If I felt sort of peckish they let me suck a little glass thermometer, but there is not much nourishment really in thermometers. And for entertainment, to while the dragging hours away, I could count the cracks in the ceiling and read my temperature chart, which was a good deal like Red Ames' batting average for the past season —ranging from ninety-nine to one hundred and four.

Also, through daily conversations with my nurse and with the surgeons who dropped in from time to time to have a look at me, I learned, as I lay there, a great deal about the medical profession—that is, a great deal for a layman—and what I learned filled me with an abiding admiration for it, both as a science and as a busi-

ness. This surely is one profession which ever keeps its face to the front. Burying its past mistakes and forgetting them as speedily as possible, it pushes straight forward into fresh fields and fresh patients, always hopeful of what the future may bring in the way of newly discovered and highly expensive ailments. As we look backward upon the centuries we are astonished by its advancement. I did a good deal of looking backwards upon the centuries during my sojourn at St. Germicide's.

Take the Middle Ages now—the period when a barber and a surgeon were one and the same. If a man made a failure as a barber he turned his talents to surgery. Surgeons in those times were a husky breed. I judge they worked by the day instead of by piecework; anyhow the records show they were very fond of experiments, where somebody else furnished the raw material.

When there came a resounding knock at the tradesman's entrance of the moated grange, the lord of the manor, looking over the portcullis and seeing a lusty wight

standing down below, in a leather apron, with his sleeves rolled up and a kit of soldering tools under his arm, didn't know until he made inquiry whether the gentle stranger had come to mend the drain or remove the cook's leg.

A little later along, when gunpowder had come into general use as a humanizing factor of civilization, surgeons treated a gunshot wound by pouring boiling lard into it, which I would say was calculated to take the victim's mind off his wound and give him something else to think about—for the time being, anyhow. I assume the notion of applying a mustard plaster outside one's stomach when one has a pain inside one's stomach is based on the same principle.

However, one doesn't have to go clear back to medieval times to note the radical differences in the plan of treating human ailments. A great many persons who are still living can remember when the doctors were not nearly so numerous as they are now. I, for one, would be the last to reverse the sentence and say that because the

doctors were not nearly so numerous then as they are now, those persons are still living so numerously.

In the spring of the year, when the sap flowed and the birds mated, the sturdy farmer felt that he was due to have something the matter with him, too. So he would ride into the country-seat and get an almanac. Doubtless the reader, if country raised, has seen copies of this popular work. On the outside cover, which was dark blue in color, there was a picture of a person whose stomach was sliced four ways, like a twenty-cent pie, and then folded back neatly, thus exposing his entire interior arrangements to the gaze of the casual observer. However, this party, judging by his picture, did not appear to be suffering. He did not even seem to fear that he might catch cold from standing there in his own draught. He was gazing off into space in an absent-minded kind of way, apparently not aware that anything was wrong with him; and on all sides he was surrounded by interesting exhibits, such as a crab, and a scorpion, and a goat, and a

chap with a bow and arrow—and one thing and another.

Such was the main design of the cover, while the contents were made up of recognized and standard varieties in the line of jokes and the line of diseases which alternated, with first a favorite joke and then a favorite disease. The author who wrote the descriptions of the diseases was one of the most convincing writers that ever lived anywhere. As a realist he had no superiors among those using our language as a vehicle for the expression of thought. He was a wonder. If a person wasn't particular about what ailed him he could read any page at random and have one specific disease. Or he could read the whole book through and have them all, in their most advanced stages. Then the only thing that could save him was a large dollar bottle.

Again, in attacks of the breakbone ague or malaria it was customary to call in a local practitioner, generally an elderly lady of the neighborhood, who had none of these latter-day prejudices regarding the use of tobacco by the gentler sex. One whom I

distantly recall, among childhood's happy memories, carried this liberal-mindedness to a point where she not only dipped snuff and smoked a cob pipe, but sometimes chewed a little natural leaf. This lady, on being called in, would brew up a large caldron of medicinal roots and barks and sprouts and things; and then she would deluge the interior of the sufferer with a large gourdful of this pleasing mixture at regular intervals. It was efficacious, too. The inundated person either got well or else he drowned from the inside. Rocking the patient was almost as dangerous a pastime as rocking the boat. This also helps to explain, I think, why so many of our forebears had floating kidneys. There was nothing else for a kidney to do.

By the time I attained to long trousers, people in our town mainly had outgrown the unlicensed expert and were depending more and more upon the old-fashioned family doctor—the one with the whisker-jungle—who drove about in a gig, accompanied by a haunting aroma of iodoform and carrying his calomel with him in bulk.

He probably owned a secret calomel mine of his own. He must have; otherwise he could never have afforded to be so generous with it. He also had other medicines with him, all of them being selected on the principle that unless a drug tasted like the very dickens it couldn't possibly do you any good. At all hours of the day and night he was to be seen going to and fro, distributing nuggets from his private lode. He went to bed with his trousers and his hat on, I think, and there was a general belief that his old mare slept between the shafts of the gig, with the bridle shoved up on her forehead.

It has been only a few years since the oldtime general practitioner was everywhere. Just look round and see now how the system has changed! If your liver begins to misconduct itself the first thought of the modern operator is to cut it out and hide it some place where you can't find it. The oldtimer would have bombarded it with a large brunette pill about the size and color of a damson plum. Or he might put you on a diet of molasses seasoned to

taste with blue mass and quinine and other attractive condiments. Likewise, in the spring of the year he frequently anointed the young of the species with a mixture of mutton suet and asafetida. This treatment had an effect that was distinctly depressing upon the growing boy. It militated against his popularity. It forced him to seek his pleasures outdoors, and a good distance outdoors at that.

It was very hard for a boy, however naturally attractive he might be, to retain his popularity at the fireside circle when coated with mutton suet and asafetida and then taken into a warm room. He attracted attention which he did not court and which was distasteful to him. Keeping quiet did not seem to help him any. Even if they had been blindfolded others would still have felt his presence. A civit-cat suffers from the same drawbacks in a social way, but the advantage to the civit-cat is that as a general thing it associates only with other civit-cats.

Except in the country the old-time, catch-as-catch-can general practitioner appears to

be dying out. In the city one finds him occasionally, playing a limit game in an office on a back street—two dollars to come in, five to call; but the tendency of the day is toward specialists. Hence the expert who treats you for just one particular thing. With a pain in your chest, say, you go to a chest specialist. So long as he can keep the trouble confined to your chest, all well and good. If it slips down or slides up he tries to coax it back to the reservation. If it refuses to do so, he bids it an affectionate adieu, makes a dotted mark on you to show where he left off, collects his bill and regretfully turns you over to a stomach specialist or a throat specialist, depending on the direction in which the trouble was headed when last seen.

Or, perhaps the specialist to whom you take your custom is an advocate of an immediate operation for such cases as yours and all others. I may be unduly sensitive on account of having recently emerged from the surgeon's hands, but it strikes me now that there are an awful lot of doctors who take one brief glance at a person who is complaining, and say to themselves that

here is something that ought to be looked into right away—and immediately open a bag and start picking out the proper utensils. You go into a doctor's office and tell him you do not feel the best in the world—and he gives you a look and excuses himself, and steps into the next room and begins greasing a saw.

Mind you, in these casual observations as compiled by me while bedfast and here given utterance, I am not seeking to disparage possibly the noblest of professions. Lately I have owed much to it. I am strictly on the doctor's side. He is with us when we come into the world and with us when we go out of it, oftentimes lending a helping hand on both occasions. Anyway, our sympathies should especially go out to the medical profession at this particular time when the anti-vivisectionists are railing so loudly against the doctors. The anti-vivisection crusade has enlisted widely different classes in the community, including many lovers of our dumb-animal pets—and aren't some of them the dumbest things you ever saw!—especially chow dogs and love birds.

I will admit there is something to be said on both sides of the argument. This dissecting of live subjects may have been carried to extremes on occasions. When I read in the medical journals that the eminent Doctor Somebody succeeded in transferring the interior department of a pelican to a pointer pup, and vice versa, with such success that the pup drowned while diving for minnows, and the pelican went out in the back yard and barked himself to death baying at the moon, I am interested naturally; but, possibly because of my ignorance, I fail to see wherein the treatment of infantile paralysis has been materially advanced. On the other hand, I would rather the kind and gentle Belgian hare should be offered up as a sacrifice upon the operating table and leave behind him a large family of little Belgian heirs and heiresses—dependent upon the charity of a cruel world—than that I should have something painful which can be avoided through making him a martyr. I would rather any white rabbit on earth should have the Asiatic cholera twice than that I should have it just once. These are my

sincere convictions, and I will not attempt to disguise them.

Thanks, too, to medical science we know about germs and serums and diets and all that. Our less fortunate ancestors didn't know about them. They were befogged in ignorance. As recently as the generation immediately preceding ours people were unacquainted with the simplest rules of hygiene. They didn't care whether the housefly wiped his feet before he came into the house or not. The gentleman with the drooping, cream-separator mustache was at perfect liberty to use the common drinking cup on the railroad train. The appendix lurked in its snug retreat, undisturbed by the prying fingers of curiosity. The fever-bearing skeeter buzzed and flitted, stinging where he pleased. The germ theory was unfathomed. Suitable food for an invalid was anything the invalid could afford to buy. Fresh air, and more especially fresh night air, was regarded as dangerous, and people hermetically sealed themselves in before retiring. Not daily as at present was the world gladdened by the tidings that science had un-

earthed some new and particularly unpleasant disease. It never occurred to a mother that she should sterilize the slipper before spanking her offspring. Babies were not reared antiseptically, but just so. Nobody was aware of microbes.

In short, our sires and our grandsires abode in the midst of perils. They were surrounded on all sides by things that are immediately fatal to the human system. Not a single one of them had a right to pass his second birthday. In the light of what we know, we realize that by now this world should be but a barren waste, dotted at frequent intervals with large graveyards and populated only by a few dispossessed and hungry bacteria, hanging over the cemetery fence singing: Driven From Home!

In the conditions generally prevalent up to twenty-five years ago, most of us never had any license, really, to be born at all. Yet look how many of us are now here. In this age of research I hesitate to attempt to account for it, except on the entirely unscientific theory that what you don't know doesn't hurt you. Doubtless a physician

could give you a better explanation, but his would cost you more than mine has.

But we digress. Let us get back to our main subject, which is myself. I shall never forget my first real meal in that hospital. There was quite a good deal of talk about it beforehand. My nurse kept telling me that on the next day the doctor had promised I might have something to eat. I could hardly wait. I had visions of a tenderloin steak smothered in fried onions, and some French-fried potatoes, and a tall table-limit stack of wheat cakes, and a few other incidental comfits and kickshaws. I could hardly wait for that meal.

The next day came and she brought it to me, and I partook thereof. It was the white of an egg. For dessert I licked a stamp; but this I did clandestinely and by stealth, without saying anything about it to her. I was not supposed to have any sweets.

On the occasion of the next feast the diet was varied. I had a sip of one of those fermented milk products. You probably know the sort of thing I mean. Even before you've swallowed it, it tastes as though

it had already disagreed with you. The nurse said this food was predigested but did not tell me by whom. Nor did I ask her. I started to, but thought better of it. Sometimes one is all the happier for not knowing too much.

A little later on, seeing that I had not suffered an attack of indigestion from this debauch, they gave me junket. In the dictionary I have looked up the definitions of junket. I quote:

JUNKET, *v.* I. *t.* To entertain by feasting; regale. II. *i.* To give or take part in an entertainment or excursion; feast in company; picnic; revel.

JUNKET, *n.* A merry feast or excursion; picnic.

When the author of a dictionary tries to be frivolous he only succeeds in making himself appear foolish.

I know not how it may be in the world at large, but in a hospital, junket is a custard that by some subtle process has been denuded of those ingredients which make a custard fascinating and exciting. It tastes as though the eggs, which form its under-

lying basis, had been laid in a fit of pique by a hen that was severely upset at the time.

Hereafter when the junket is passed round somebody else may have my share. I'll stick to the mince pie *à la mode*.

And the first cigar of my convalescence —ah, that, too, abides as a vivid memory! Dropping in one morning to replace the wrappings Doctor Z said I might smoke in moderation. So the nurse brought me a cigar, and I lit it and took one deep puff; but only one. I laid it aside. I said to the nurse:

"A mistake has been made here. I do not want a cooking cigar, you understand. I desire a cigar for personal use. This one is full of herbs and simples, I think. It suggests a New England boiled dinner, and not a very good New England boiled dinner at that. Let us try again."

She brought another cigar. It was not satisfactory either. Then she showed me the box—an orthodox box containing cigars of a recognized and previously dependable brand. I could only conclude that a root-and-herb doctor had bought an interest in the business and was introducing his own pet notions into the formula.

But came a day—as the fancy writers say when they wish to convey the impression that a day has come, but hate to do it in a commonplace manner—came a day when my cigar tasted as a cigar should taste and food had the proper relish to it; and my appetite came back again and found the old home place not so greatly changed after all.

And then shortly thereafter came another day, when I, all replete with expensive stitches, might drape the customary habiliments of civilization about my attenuated frame and go forth to mingle with my fellow beings. I have been mingling pretty steadily ever since, for now I have something to talk about—a topic good for any company; congenial, an absorbing topic.

I can spot a brother member a block away. I hasten up to him and give him the grand hailing sign of the order. He opens his mouth to speak, but I beat him to it.

"Speaking of operations ——" I say. And then I'm off.

Believe me, it's the life!

WALT WHITMAN

SELECTIONS FROM
"THE WINGED HORSE ANTHOLOGY"
AS CHOSEN BY
JOSEPH AUSLANDER AND
FRANK ERNEST HILL
FROM "LEAVES OF GRASS"

EIGHT of the most famous poems by the Manhattan bard whom Europe considers America's greatest poet.

AS I PONDERED IN SILENCE
SONG OF MYSELF
SONG OF THE OPEN ROAD
OUT OF THE CRADLE ENDLESSLY ROCKING
WHEN I HEARD THE LEARN'D ASTRONOMER
VIGIL STRANGE I KEPT ON THE FIELD ONE NIGHT
DEATH CAROL
PIONEERS! O PIONEERS!

WALT WHITMAN

1819–1892

As I Pondered in Silence

I

As I ponder'd in silence,
Returning upon my poems, considering, lingering long,
A Phantom arose before me, with distrustful aspect,
Terrible in beauty, age, and power,
The genius of poets of old lands,
As to me directing like flames its eyes,
With finger pointing to many immortal songs,
And menacing voice, *What singest thou?* it said;
Know'st thou not, there is but one theme for ever-enduring bards?
And that is the theme of War, the fortune of battles,
The making of perfect soldiers?

II

Be it so, then I answer'd,
I too, haughty Shade, also sing war—and a longer and greater one than any,
Waged in my book with varying fortune—with flight, advance and retreat—Victory deferr'd and wavering,
(Yet, methinks, certain, or as good as certain, at the last,)—The field the world;
For life and death—for the Body, and for the eternal Soul,
Lo! I too am come, chanting the chant of battles,
I, above all, promote brave soldiers.

SONG OF MYSELF

I

I celebrate myself;
And what I assume you shall assume;
For every atom belonging to me, as good belongs to you.

I loaf and invite my Soul;
I lean and loafe at my ease, observing a spear of summer grass.

Houses and rooms are full of perfumes—the shelves are crowded with perfumes;
I breathe the fragrance myself, and know it and like it;
The distillation would intoxicate me also, but I shall not let it. . . .

II

. . . Have you reckon'd a thousand acres much? have you reckon'd the earth much?
Have you practis'd so long to learn to read?
Have you felt so proud to get at the meaning of poems?

Stop this day and night with me, and you shall possess the origin of all poems;
You shall possess the good of the earth and sun—(there are millions of suns left;)
You shall no longer take things at second or third hand, nor look through the eyes of the dead, nor feed on the spectres in books;
You shall not look through my eyes either, nor take things from me:
You shall listen to all sides, and filter them from yourself.

III

I have heard what the talkers were talking, the talk of the beginning and the end;
But I do not talk of the beginning or the end.

There was never any more inception than there is now,
Nor any more youth or age than there is now;
And will never be any more perfection than there is now,
Nor any more heaven or hell than there is now.
Urge, and urge, and urge;
Always the procreant urge of the world. . . .

VI

A child said, *What is the grass?* fetching it to me with full hands;
How could I answer the child? I do not know what it is, any more than he.

I guess it must be the flag of my disposition, out of hopeful green stuff woven.

Or I guess it is the handkerchief of the Lord,
A scented gift and remembrancer, designedly dropt,
Bearing the owner's name someway in the corners, that we may see and remark, and say, *Whose?*
Or I guess the grass is itself a child, the produced babe of the vegetation.

Or I guess it is a uniform hieroglyphic;
And it means, Sprouting alike in broad zones and narrow zones,
Growing among black folks as among white;
Kanuck, Tuckahoe, Congressman, Cuff, I give them the same, I receive them the same.

And now it seems to me the beautiful uncut hair of graves.

Tenderly will I use you, curling grass;
It may be you transpire from the breasts of young men;
It may be if I had known them I would have loved them;
It may be you are from old people, and from women, and from offspring taken soon out of their mother's laps;
And here you are the mother's laps. . . .

What do you think has become of the young and old men?
And what do you think has become of the women and children?

They are alive and well somewhere;
The smallest sprout shows there is really no death;
And if ever there was, it led forward life, and does not wait at the end to arrest it,
And ceas'd the moment life appear'd.

And goes onward and outward—nothing collapses;
And to die is different from what anyone supposed, and luckier. . . .

XVIII

With music strong I come—with my cornets and my drums,
I play not marches for accepted victors only—I play great marches for conquer'd and slain persons.

Have you heard that it was good to gain the day?
I also say it is good to fall—battles are lost in the same spirit in which they are won.

I beat and pound for the dead;
I blow through my embouchures my loudest and gayest for them.

Vivas to those who have fail'd!
And to those whose war-vessels sank in the sea!
And to those themselves who sank in the sea!
And to all generals that lost engagements! and all overcome heroes!

And the numberless unknown heroes, equal to the greatest heroes known. . . .

XXI

I am the poet of the Body;
And I am the poet of the Soul.

The pleasures of heaven are with me, and the pains of hell are with me;
The first I graft and increase upon myself—the latter I translate into a new tongue.

I am the poet of the woman the same as the man;
And I say it is as great to be a woman as to be a man;
And I say there is nothing greater than the mother of men.

I chant the chant of dilation or pride;
We have had ducking and deprecating about enough;
I show that size is only development.

Have you outstript the rest? Are you the President?
It is a trifle—they will more than arrive there, every one, and still pass on.

I am he that walks with the tender and growing night;
I call to the earth and sea, half-held by the night.

Press close, bare-bosom'd night! Press close, magnetic, nourishing night!

Night of south winds! night of the large few stars!
Still, nodding night! mad, naked, summer night.

Smile, O voluptuous, cool-breath'd earth!
Earth of the slumbering and liquid trees;
Earth of departed sunset! earth of the mountains, misty-topt!
Earth of the vitreous pour of the full moon, just tinged with blue!
Earth of shine and dark, mottling the tide of the river!
Earth of the limpid gray of clouds, brighter and clearer for my sake!
Far-swooping elbow'd earth! rich, apple-blossom'd earth!
Smile, for your lover comes! . . .

XXII

You sea! I resign myself to you also—I guess what you mean;
I behold from the beach your crooked inviting fingers;
I believe you refuse to go back without feeling of me;
We must have a turn together—I undress—hurry me out of sight of the land;
Cushion me soft, rock me in billowy drowse;
Dash me with amorous wet—I can repay you.

Sea of stretch'd ground-swells!
Sea breathing broad and convulsive breaths!
Sea of the brine of life! sea of unshovell'd yet always-ready graves!
Howler and scooper of storms! capricious and dainty sea!
I am integral with you—I too am of one phase, and of all phases. . . .

XXXII

I think I could turn and live with animals, they are so placid and self-contain'd;
I stand and look at them long and long.
They do not sweat and whine about their condition;
They do not lie awake in the dark and weep for their sins;
They do not make me sick discussing their duty to God;

Not one is dissatisfied—not one is demented with the mania of owning things;

Not one kneels to another, nor to his kind that lived thousands of years ago;
Not one is respectable or industrious over the whole earth. . . .

A gigantic beauty of a stallion, fresh and responsive to my caresses,
Head high in the forehead, wide between the ears,
Limbs glossy and supple, tail dusting the ground,
Eyes full of sparkling wickedness—ears finely cut, flexibly moving.

His nostrils dilate, as my heels embrace him;
His well-built limbs tremble with pleasure, as we race around and return.
I but use you a moment, then I resign you, stallion;
Why do I need your paces, when I myself out-gallop them?
Even, as I stand or sit, passing faster than you. . . .

XXXIII

. . . I am a free companion—I bivouac by invading watchfires. . . .

My voice is the wife's voice, the screech by the rail of the stairs;
They fetch my man's body up, dripping and drown'd.

I understand the large hearts of heroes,
The courage of present times and all times;
How the skipper saw the crowded and rudderless wreck of the steamship, and Death chasing it up and down the storm;
How he knuckled tight, and gave not back one inch, and was faithful of days and faithful of nights,
And chalk'd in large letters, on a board, *Be of good cheer, we will not desert you:*
How he follow'd with them, and tack'd with them—and would not give it up;
How he saved the drifting company at last;
How the lank loose-gown'd women look'd when boated from the side of their prepared graves,
How the silent old-faced infants, and the lifted sick, and the sharp-lipp'd unshaved men:

All this I swallow—it tastes good—I like it well—it becomes mine;
I am the man—I suffer'd—I was there.

The disdain and calmness of olden martyrs;
The mother, condemn'd for a witch, burnt with dry wood, her children gazing on;
The hounded slave that flags in the race, leans by the fence, blowing, cover'd with sweat;
The twinges that sting like needles his legs and neck—the murderous buckshot and the bullets;
All these I feel, or am.

I am the hounded slave, I wince at the bite of the dogs,
Hell and despair are upon me, crack and again crack the marksmen;
I clutch the rails of the fence, my gore drips, thinn'd with the ooze of my skin;
I fall on the weeds and stones;
The riders spur their unwilling horses, haul close,
Taunt my dizzy ears, and beat me violently over the head with whip-stocks. . . .

XL

Flaunt of the sunshine, I need not your bask,—lie over!
You light surfaces only—I force surfaces and depths also.

Earth! you seem to look for something at my hands;
Say, old Top-knot! what do you want?

Man or woman! I might tell how I like you, but cannot;
And might tell what it is in me, and what it is in you, but cannot;
And might tell that pining I have—that pulse of my nights and days.

Behold! I do not give lectures, or a little charity;
When I give, I give myself.

You there, impotent, loose in the knees!

Open your scarf'd chops till I blow grit within you;
Spread your palms, and lift the flaps of your pockets;
I am not to be denied—I compel—I have stores plenty and to spare;
And anything I have I bestow.

I do not ask who you are—that is not so important to me;
You can do nothing, and be nothing, but what I will infold you. . . .
I seize the descending man, and raise him with resistless will.

O despairer, here is my neck;
By God! you shall not go down! Hang your whole weight upon me.

I dilate you with tremendous breath—I buoy you up;
Every room of the house do I fill with an arm'd force,
Lovers of me, bafflers of graves.

Sleep! I and they keep guard all night;
Not doubt—not decease shall dare to lay finger upon you;
I have embraced you, and henceforth possess you to myself;
And when you rise in the morning you will find what I tell you is so. . . .

XLVIII

I have said that the soul is not more than the body,
And I have said that the body is not more than the soul;
And nothing, not God, is greater to one than one's self is,
And whoever walks a furlong without sympathy, walks to his own funeral, drest in his shroud,
And I or you, pocketless of a dime, may purchase the pick of the earth,
And to glance with an eye, or show a bean in its pod, confounds the learning of all times,
And there is no trade or employment but the young man following it may become a hero,
And there is no object so soft but it makes a hub for the wheel'd universe,
And I say to any man or woman, Let your soul stand cool and composed before a million universes. . . .

XLI

The past and present wilt—I have fill'd them, emptied them,
And proceed to fill my next fold of the future.

Listener up there! Here, you! What have you to confide to me?
Look in my face, while I snuff the sidle of evening;
Talk honestly—no one else hears you, and I stay only a minute longer.

Do I contradict myself?
Very well, then, I contradict myself;
(I am large—I contain multitudes.)

I concentrate toward them that are nigh—I wait on the door-slab.

Who has done his day's work? Who will soonest be through with his supper?
Who wishes to walk with me?

Will you speak before I am gone? Will you prove already too late?

LII

The spotted hawk swoops by and accuses me—he complains of my gab and my loitering.
I too am not a bit tamed—I too am untranslatable;
I sound my barbaric yawp over the roofs of the world.

The last scud of day holds back for me;
It flings my likeness after the rest, and true as any, on the shadow'd wilds;
It coaxes me to the vapor and the dusk.

I depart as air—I shake my white locks at the runaway sun;
I effuse my flesh in eddies, and drift it in lacy jags.

I bequeath myself to the dirt, to grow from the grass I love:
If you want me again, look for me under your boot-soles.

You will hardly know who I am, or what I mean;
But I shall be good health to you nevertheless,
And filter and fibre your blood.

Failing to fetch me at first, keep encouraged;
Missing me one place, search another;
I stop somewhere, waiting for you.

Song of the Open Road

I

Afoot and light-hearted, I take to the open road,
Healthy, free, the world before me,
The long brown path before me, leading wherever I choose.

Henceforth I ask not good-fortune—I myself am good-fortune;
Henceforth I whimper no more, postpone no more, need nothing,
Strong and content, I travel the open road.

The earth—that is sufficient;
I do not want the constellations any nearer;
I know they are very well where they are;
I know they suffice for those who belong to them. . . .

II

You road I enter upon and look around! I believe you are not all that is here;
I believe that much unseen is also here. . .

III

You air that serves me with breath to speak!
You objects that call from diffusion my meanings, and give them shape!
You light that wraps me and all things in delicate equable showers!
You paths worn in the irregular hollows by the roadsides!
I think you are latent with unseen existences—you are so dear to me.

You flagg'd walks of the cities! you strong curbs at the edges!
You ferries! you planks and posts of wharves! you timber-lined sides! you distant ships!
You rows of houses! you window-pierc'd facades! you roofs! . . .

From all that has been near you, I believe you have imparted to yourselves, and now would impart the same secretly to me;
From the living and the dead I think you have peopled your impassive surfaces, and the spirits thereof would be evident and amicable with me.

V

From this hour freedom!
From this hour I ordain myself loos'd of limits and imaginary lines,
Going where I list, my own master, total and absolute,
Listening to others, and considering well what they say,
Pausing, searching, receiving, contemplating,
Gently, but with undeniable will, divesting myself of the holds that would hold me.

I inhale great draughts of space;
The east and the west are mine, and the north and the south are mine. . . .

VI

. . . Now I see the secret of the making of the best persons,
It is to grow in the open air, and to eat and sleep with the earth. . . .

IX

Allons! whoever you are, come travel with me!
Traveling with me, you find what never tires.

The earth never tires;
The earth is rude, silent, incomprehensible at first—Nature is rude and incomprehensible at first;
Be not discouraged—keep on—there are divine things, well envelop'd;

I swear to you there are divine things more beautiful than words can tell.

Allons! we must not stop here!
However sweet these laid-up stores—however convenient this dwelling, we cannot remain here;
However shelter'd this port, and however calm these waters, we must not anchor here;
However welcome the hospitality that surrounds us, we are permitted to receive it but a little while.

XI

Listen! I will be honest with you;
I do not offer the old smooth prizes, but offer rough new prizes;
These are the days that must happen to you:

You shall not heap up what is call'd riches,
You shall scatter with lavish hand all that you earn or achieve,
You but arrive at the city to which you were destin'd—you hardly settle yourself to satisfaction, before you are call'd by an irresistible call to depart,
You shall be treated to the ironical smiles and mockings of those who remain behind you;
What beckonings of love you receive, you shall only answer with passionate kisses of parting,
You shall not allow the hold of those who spread their reach'd hands toward you.

XII

Allons! after the GREAT COMPANIONS! and to belong to them!
They too are on the road! they are the swift and majestic men! they are the greatest women. . . .

XIV

The Soul travels;
The body does not travel as much as the soul;
The body has just as great a work as the soul, and parts away at last for the journeys of the soul.

All parts away for the progress of souls;
All religion, all solid things, arts, governments,—all that was or is apparent upon this globe or any globe, falls into riches and corners before the procession of Souls along the grand roads of the universe.

Of the progress of the souls of men and women along the grand roads of the universe, all other progress is the needed emblem and sustenance. . . .

XV

Allons! whoever you are! come forth!
You must not stay sleeping and dallying there in the house, though you built it, or though it has been built for you.

Allons! out of the dark confinement
It is useless to protest—I know all, and expose it.

Behold, through you as bad as the rest,
Through the laughter, dancing, dining, supping, of people,
Inside of dresses and ornaments, inside of those wash'd and trimm'd faces,
Behold a secret silent loathing and despair. . . .

XVII

Allons! the road is before us!
It is safe—I have tried it—my own feet have tried it well:

Allons! be not detain'd!
Let the paper remain on the desk unwritten, and the book on the shelf unopen'd!
Let the tools remain in the workshop! let the money remain unearn'd!
Let the school stand! mind not the cry of the teacher!
Let the preacher preach in his pulpit! let the lawyer plead in the court, and the judge expound the law.

Mon enfant! I give you my hand!
I give you my love, more precious than money,

I give you myself, before preaching or law;
Will you give me yourself? will you come travel with me?
Shall we stick by each other as long as we live?

Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking

I

Out of the cradle endlessly rocking,
Out of the mocking bird's throat, the musical shuttle,
Out of the Ninth-month midnight,
Over the sterile sands, and the fields beyond, where the child,
leaving his bed, wander'd alone, bare-headed, barefoot,
Down from the shower'd halo,
Up from the mystic play of shadows, twining and twisting as if
they were alive,
Out from the patches of briers and blackberries,
From the memories of the bird that chanted to me,
From your memories, sad brother—from the fitful risings and
fallings I heard,
From under that yellow half-moon, late-risen, and swollen as if
with tears,
From those beginning notes of yearning and love there in the mist,
From the thousand responses of my heart, never to cease,
From the myriad thence-arous'd words,
From the word stronger and more delicious than any,
From such, as now they start, the scene revisiting,
As a flock, twittering, rising, or overhead passing,
Borne hither—ere all eludes me, hurriedly,
A man—yet by these tears a little boy again,
Throwing myself on the sand, confronting the waves,
I, chanter of pains and joys, uniter of here and hereafter,
Taking all hints to use them—but swiftly leaping beyond them,
A reminiscence sing.

II

Once, Paumanok,
When the snows had melted—when the lilac-scent was in the air,
and the Fifth-month grass was growing,
Up this sea-shore, in some briers,

Two feather'd guests from Alabama—two together,
And their nest, and four light-green eggs, spotted with brown,
And every day the he-bird, to and fro, near at hand,
And every day the she-bird, crouch'd on her nest, silent, with bright eyes,
And every day I, a curious boy, never too close, never disturbing them,
Cautiously peering, absorbing, translating.

III

Shine! shine! shine!
Pour down your warmth, great Sun!
While we bask—we two together.
Two together!
Winds blow South, or winds blow North,
Day come white, or night come black,
Home, or rivers and mountains from home,
Singing all time, minding no time,
While we two keep together.

IV

Till of a sudden,
May-be kill'd, unknown to her mate,
One forenoon the she-bird crouch'd not on the nest,
Nor return'd that afternoon, nor the next,
Nor ever appear'd again.

And thenceforward, all summer, in the sound of the sea,
And at night, under the full of the moon, in calmer weather,
Over the hoarse surging of the sea,
Or flitting from brier to brier by day,
I saw, I heard at intervals, the remaining one, the he-bird,
The solitary guest from Alabama.

V

Blow! blow! blow!
Blow, up, sea-winds, along Paumanok's shore!
I wait and I wait, till you blow my mate to me.

VI

Yes, when the stars glisten'd,
All night long, on the prong of a moss-scallop'd stake,
Down, almost amid the slapping waves,
Sat the lone singer, wonderful, causing tears.

He call'd on his mate;
He pour'd forth the meanings which I, of all men, know.

Yes, my brother, I know;
The rest might not—but I have treasur'd every note;
For once, and more than once, dimly, down to the beach gliding,
Silent, avoiding the moonbeams, blending myself with the shadows,
Recalling now the obscure shapes, the echoes, the sounds and sights
after their sorts,
The white arms out in the breakers tirelessly tossing,
I, with bare feet, a child, the wind wafting my hair,
Listen'd long and long.

Listen'd, to keep, to sing—now translating the notes,
Following you, my brother.

VII

Soothe! soothe! soothe!
Close on its wave soothes the wave behind,
And again another behind, embracing and lapping, every one close,
But my love soothes not me, not me.

Low hangs the moon—it rose late;
O it is lagging—O I think it is heavy with love, with love.

O madly the sea pushes, pushes upon the land,
With love—with love.
O night! do I not see my love fluttering out there among the breakers?
What is that little black thing I see there in the white?

Loud! loud! loud!
Loud I call to you, my love!

High and clear I shoot my voice over the waves;
Surely you must know who is here, is here;
You must know who I am, my love.

Low-hanging moon!
What is that dusky spot in your brown yellow?
O it is the shape, the shape of my mate!
O moon, do not keep her from me any longer.

Land! land! O land!
Whichever way I turn, O I think you could give me my mate back again, if you only would;
For I am almost sure I see her dimly whichever way I look.

O rising stars!
Perhaps the one I want so much will rise, will rise with some of you.

O throat! O trembling throat!
Sound clearer through the atmosphere!
Pierce the woods, the earth;
Somewhere listening to catch you, must be the one I want.

Shake out, carols!
Solitary here—the night's carols!
Carols of lonesome love! Death's carols!
Carols under that lagging, yellow, waning moon!
O, under that moon, where she droops almost down into the sea!
O reckless, despairing carols.

But low! sink low;
Soft! let me just murmur;
And do you wait a moment, you husky-noised sea;
For somewhere I believe I heard my mate responding to me,
So faint—I must be still, be still to listen;
But not altogether still, for then she might not come immediately to me.

Hither! my love!
Here I am! Here!
With this just-sustain'd note I announce myself to you;
This gentle call is for you, my love, for you.

Do not be decoy'd elsewhere!
That is the whistle of the wind—it is not my voice;
That is the fluttering, the fluttering of the spray;
Those are the shadows of leaves.

O darkness! O in vain!
O I am very sick and sorrowful.

O brown halo in the sky, near the moon, drooping upon the sea!
O troubled reflection in the sea!
O throat! O throbbing heart!
O all—and I singing uselessly, uselessly all the night.

Yet I murmur, murmur on!
O murmurs—you yourselves make me continue to sing, I know not why.

O past! O life! O songs of joy!
In the air—in the woods—over fields;
Loved! loved! loved! loved! loved!
But my love no more, no more with me!
We two together no more.

VIII

The aria sinking;
All else continuing—the stars shining,
The winds blowing—the notes of the bird continuous echoing,
With angry moans the fierce old mother incessantly moaning,
On the sands of Paumanok's shore, gray and rustling;
The yellow half-moon enlarged, sagging down, drooping, the face of the sea almost touching;
The boy ecstatic—with his bare feet the waves, with his hair the atmosphere dallying,
The love in the heart long pent, now loose, now at last tumultuously bursting,
The aria's meaning, the ears, the Soul, swiftly depositing,
The colloquy there—the trio—each uttering,
The undertone—the savage old mother, incessantly crying,
To the boy's Soul's questions sullenly timing—some drown'd secret hissing,
To the outsetting bard of love.

IX

Demon or bird! (said the boy's soul,)
Is it indeed toward your mate you sing? or is it mostly to me?
For I, that was a child, my tongue's use sleeping,
Now I have heard you,
Now in a moment I know what I am for—I awake,
And already a thousand singers—a thousand songs, clearer, louder and more sorrowful than yours,
A thousand warbling echoes have startled to life within me,
Never to die.

O you singer, solitary, singing by yourself—projecting me;
O solitary me, listening—nevermore shall I cease perpetuating you;
Never more shall I escape, never more the reverberations,
Never more the cries of unsatisfied love be absent from me,
Never again leave me to be the peaceful child I was before what there, in the night,
By the sea, under the yellow and sagging moon,
The messenger there arous'd—the fire, the sweet hell within,
The unknown want, the destiny of me.

O give me the clew! (it lurks in the night here somewhere;)
O if I am to have so much, let me have more!
O a word! O what is my destination? (I fear it is henceforth chaos;)
O how joys, dreads, convolutions, human shapes, and all shapes, spring as from graves around me!
O phantoms! you cover all the land and all the sea!
O I cannot see in the dimness whether you smile or frown upon me;
O vapor, a look, a word! O well-beloved!
O you dear women's and men's phantoms!

A word then, (for I will conquer it,)
The word final, superior to all,
Subtle, sent up—what is it?—I listen;
Are you whispering it, and have been all the time, you sea-waves?
Is that it from your liquid rims and wet sands?

X

Whereto answering, the sea,
Delaying not, hurrying not,
Whisper'd me through the night, and very plainly before daybreak,
Lisp'd to me the low and delicious word DEATH;
And again Death—ever Death, Death, Death,
Hissing melodious, neither like the bird, nor like my arous'd child's heart,
But edging near, as privately for me, rustling at my feet,
Creeping thence steadily up to my ears, and laving me softly all over,
Death, Death, Death, Death, Death.

Which I do not forget,
But fuse the song of my dusky demon and brother,
That he sang to me in the moonlight on Paumanok's gray beach,
With the thousand responsive songs, at random,
My own songs, awaked from that hour;
And with them the key, the word up from the waves,
The word of the sweetest song, and all songs,
That strong and delicious word which, creeping to my feet,
The sea whisper'd me.

When I Heard the Learn'd Astronomer

When I heard the learn'd astronomer;
When the proofs, the figures, were ranged in columns before me;
When I was shown the charts and the diagrams, to add, divide, and measure them;
When I, sitting, heard the astronomer, where he lectured with much applause in the lecture-room,
How soon, unaccountable, I became tired and sick;
Till rising and gliding out, I wander'd off by myself,
In the mystical moist night-air, and from time to time,
Look'd up in perfect silence at the stars.

Vigil Strange I Kept on the Field One Night

Vigil strange I kept on the field one night:
When you, my son and my comrade, dropt at my side that day,

One look I but gave, which your dear eyes return'd, with a look I shall never forget;
One touch of your hand to mine, O boy, reach'd up as you lay on the ground;
Then onward I sped in the battle, the even-contested battle;
Till late in the night reliev'd, to the place at last again I made my way;
Found you in death so cold, dear comrade—found your body, son of responding kisses, (never again on earth responding;)
Bared your face in the starlight—curious the scene—cool blew the moderate night-wind;
Long there and then in vigil I stood, dimly around me the battle-field spreading;
Vigil wondrous and vigil sweet, there in the fragrant silent night;
But not a tear fell, not even a long-drawn sigh—Long, long I gazed;
Then on the earth partially reclining, sat by your side, leaning my chin in my hands;
Passing sweet hours, immortal and mystic hours with you, dearest comrade—Not a tear, not a word;
Vigil of silence, love and death—vigil for you my son and my soldier,
As onward silently stars aloft, eastward new ones upward stole;
Vigil final for you, brave boy, (I could not save you, swift was your death,
I faithfully loved you and cared for you living—I think we shall surely meet again;)
Till at latest lingering of the night, indeed just as the dawn appear'd,
My comrade I wrapt in his blanket, envelop'd well his form,
Folded the blanket well, tucking it carefully over head, and carefully under feet;
And there and then, and bathed by the rising sun, my son in his grave, in his rude-dug grave I deposited;
Ending my vigil strange with that—vigil of night and battlefield dim;
Vigil for boy of responding kisses, (never again on earth responding;)
Vigil for comrade swiftly slain—vigil I never forget, how as day brighten'd,

I rose from the chill ground, and folded my soldier well in his blanket,
And buried him where he fell.

Death Carol

FROM "WHEN LILACS LAST IN THE DOOR-YARD BLOOM'D"

Come, lovely and soothing Death,
Undulate round the world, serenely arriving, arriving,
In the day, in the night, to all, to each,
Sooner or later, delicate Death.

Prais'd be the fathomless universe,
For life and joy, and for objects and knowledge curious;
And for love, sweet love—But praise! praise! praise!
For the sure-enwinding arms of cool-enfolding Death.

Dark Mother, always gliding near, with soft feet,
Have none chanted for thee a chant of fullest welcome?
Then I chant it for thee—I glorify thee above all;
I bring thee a song that when thou must indeed come, come unfalteringly.

Approach, strong Deliveress!
When it is so—when thou hast taken them, I joyously sing the dead,
Lost in the loving, floating ocean of thee,
Laved in the flood of thy bliss, O Death.

From me to thee glad serenades,
Dances for thee I propose, saluting thee—adornments and feastings for thee;
And the sights of the open landscape, and the high-spread sky, are fitting,
And life and the fields, and the huge and thoughtful night.

The night, in silence, under many a star;

The ocean shore, and the husky whispering wave, whose voice I know;
And the soul turning to thee, O vast and well-veil'd Death,
And the body gratefully nestling close to thee.

Over the tree-tops I float thee a song!
Over the rising and sinking waves—over the myriad fields, and the prairies wide;
Over the dense-pack'd cities all, and the teeming wharves and ways,
I float this carol with joy, with joy to thee, O Death!

Pioneers! O Pioneers!

I

Come, my tan-faced children,
Follow well in order, get your weapons ready;
Have you your pistols? have you your sharp edged axes?
Pioneers! O pioneers!

II

For we cannot tarry here,
We must march, my darlings, we must bear the brunt of danger,
We, the youthful sinewy races, all the rest on us depend,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

III

O you youths, western youths,
So impatient, full of action, full of manly pride and friendship,
Plain I see you, western youths, see you tramping with the foremost,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

IV

Have the elder races halted?
Do they droop and end their lesson, wearied, over there beyond the seas?
We take up the task eternal, and the burden, and the lesson,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

V

All the past we leave behind;
We debouch upon a newer, mightier world, varied world,
Fresh and strong the world we seize, world of labor and the march,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

VI

We detachments steady throwing,
Down the edges, through the passes, up the mountains steep,
Conquering, holding, daring, venturing, as we go, the unknown ways,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

. . . . . .

X

O resistless, restless race!
O beloved race in all! O my breast aches with tender love for all!
O I mourn and yet exult—I am rapt with love for all,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

. . . . . .

XIII

On and on, the compact ranks,
With accessions ever waiting, with the places of the dead quickly fill'd,
Through the battle, through defeat, moving yet and never stopping,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

XIV

O to die advancing on!
Are there some of us to droop and die? has the hour come?
Then upon the march we fittest die, soon and sure the gap is fill'd,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

XV

All the pulses of the world,
Falling in, they beat for us, with the western movement beat;
Holding single or together, steady moving, to the front, all for us,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

XVI

Life's involv'd and varied pageants,
All the forms and shows, all the workmen at their work,
All the seamen and the landsmen, all the masters with their slaves,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

XVII

All the hapless silent lovers,
All the prisoners in the prisons, all the righteous and the wicked,
All the joyous, all the sorrowing, all the living, all the dying,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

XVIII

I too with my soul and body,
We, a curious trio, picking, wandering on our way,
Through these shores, amid the shadows, with the apparitions pressing,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

XIX

Lo! the darting bowling orb!
Lo! the brother orbs around! all the clustering suns and planets;
All the dazzling days, all the mystic nights with dreams,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

XX

These are of us, they are with us,
All for primal needed work, while the followers there in embryo wait behind,

We to-day's procession heading, we the route for travel clearing,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

XXI

O you daughters of the west!
O you young and elder daughters! O you mothers and you wives!
Never must you be divided, in our ranks you move united,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

XXII

Minstrels latent on the prairies!
(Shrouded bards of other lands! you may sleep—you have done your work;)
Soon I hear you coming warbling, soon you rise and tramp amid us,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

XXIII

Not for delectations sweet;
Not the cushion and the slipper, not the peaceful and the studious;
Not the riches safe and palling, not for us the tame enjoyment,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

XXIV

Do the feasters gluttonous feast?
Do the corpulent sleepers sleep? have they lock'd and bolted doors?
Still be ours the diet hard, and the blanket on the ground,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

XXV

Has the night descended?
Was the road of late so toilsome? did we stop discouraged, nodding on our way?
Yet a passing hour I yield you, in your tracks to pause oblivious,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

XXVI

Till with sound of trumpet,
Far, far off the day-break call—hark! how loud and clear I hear it wind;
Swift! to the head of the army!—swift! spring to your places,
Pioneers! O pioneers!

THE VERITABLE DESERT NOMADS AND NOMAD LIFE FIGHTING TO THE SEA

Three Notable Chapters

BY T. E. LAWRENCE

FROM "REVOLT IN THE DESERT"

His account of his march across the desert, blown by the breathless wind with a furnace taste, the fourth of July battle in a sun so hot that the rifles scorched their hands, and the four-mile race through a driving sand storm to the sea, are vivid chapters in the most amazing adventures of modern history.

THE VERITABLE DESERT

At dawn we saddled up for the short stage to Diraa, the water pools of which Sharraf had told us. We halted there till afternoon; for we were now quite near the railway, and had to drink our stomachs full and fill our few water skins, ready for the long dash to Fejr.

In the halt Auda came to see Farraj and Daud dress my camel with butter for relief against the intolerable itch of mange which had broken out recently on its face. The dry pasturage of the Billi country and the infected ground of Wejh had played havoc with our beasts. In all Feisal's stud of riding camels there was not one healthy; in our little expedition every camel was weakening daily. Nasir was full of anxiety lest many break down in the forced march before us and leave their riders stranded in the desert.

We had no medicines for mange and could do little for it in spite of our need. However, the rubbing and anointing did make my animal more comfortable, and we repeated it as often as Farraj or Daud could find butter in our party. These two boys were giving me great satisfaction. They were brave and cheerful, active, good riders, and willing workmen.

By a quarter to four we were in the saddle, going down Wadi Diraa, into steep and high ridges of shifting sand, sometimes with a cap of harsh red rock jutting from them. After a while, three or four of us, in advance of the main body, climbed a sand-peak on hands and knees to spy out the railway. There was no air, and the exercise was more than we required; but our reward was immediate, for the line showed itself quiet and deserted-looking. We were to have an unmolested crossing.

Our heavy camels marched over the valley, the line, and the farther flat, till sheltered in the sand and rock mouths of the country beyond the railway. Meanwhile the Ageyl fixed gun-cotton or gelatine charges to as many of the rails as we had time to reach, and began, in proper order, to light the fuses, filling the hollow valley with the echoes of repeated bursts.

Auda had not before known dynamite, and with a child's first pleasure was moved to a rush of hasty poetry on its powerful glory. We cut three telegraph wires, and fastened the free ends to the saddles of six riding camels of the Howeitat. The astonished team struggled far into the eastern valleys with the growing weight of twanging, tangling wire and the bursting poles dragging after them. At last they could no longer move. So we cut them loose and rode in the falling dusk laughing after the caravan.

In the morning Auda had us afoot before four, going uphill, till at last we climbed a ridge to a plain, with an illimitable view down hill to the east, where one gentle level after another slowly modulated into a distance only to be called distance because it was a sober blue, and more hazy. The rising sun flooded this falling plain with a perfect level of light, throwing up long shadows of almost imperceptible ridges, and the whole life and play of a complicated ground-system—but a transient one; for, as we looked at it, the shadows drew in towards the dawn, quivered a last moment behind their mother-banks, and went out as though at a common signal. Full morning had begun: the river of sunlight, sickeningly in the full-face of us moving creatures, poured impartially on every stone of the desert.

The Fejr Bedouin, whose property it was, called our plain El Houl because it was desolate; and to-day we rode without seeing signs of life; no tracks of gazelle, no lizards, no burrowing of rats, not even any birds. We, ourselves, felt tiny in it, and our urgent progress across its immensity was a stillness or immobility of futile effort. The only sounds were the hollow echoes, like the shutting down of pavements over vaulted places, of rotten stone slab on stone slab when they tilted under our camels' feet; and the low but piercing rustle of the sand, as it crept slowly westward before the hot wind along the worn sandstone, under the harder overhanging caps which gave each reef its eroded rind-like shape.

It was a breathless wind, with the furnace taste sometimes known in Egypt when a khamsin came; and, as the day went on and the sun rose in the sky it grew stronger, more filled with the dust of the Nefudh, the great sand desert of Northern Arabia, close by us over there, but invisible through the haze. By noon it blew a half-gale, so dry that our shrivelled lips cracked open, and the skin of our faces chapped; while our eyelids, gone granular,

seemed to creep back and bare our shrinking eyes. The Arabs drew their headcloths tightly across their noses, and pulled the brow-folds forward like vizors with only a narrow, loose-flapping slit of vision.

We plodded on all the day (even without the wind forbidding us there could have been no more luxury-halts under the shadow of blankets, if we would arrive unbroken men with strong camels at el Fejr), and nothing made us widen an eye or think a thought till evening, calm and black and full of stars, had come down on us. We had covered about fifty miles, so we halted.

Before dawn the following day we started, and at the height of noon reached the well of our desire. It was about thirty feet deep, stone-steyned, seemingly ancient. The water was slightly brackish, but not ill-tasting when drunk fresh: though it soon grew foul in a skin. The valley had flooded in some burst of rain the year before, and therefore contained much dry and thirsty pasturage: to this we loosed our camels, to crop industriously till nightfall, then we watered them again, and pounded them under the bank a half-mile from the water, for the night: thus leaving the well unmolested in case raiders should need it in the dark hours. Yet our sentries heard no one.

As usual we were off before dawn and reached our stage, Khabr Ajaj, just before sunset, after a dull ride over a duller plain. The pool was of this year's rain, good for camels and just possible for men to drink. We had thought to find Howeitat here; but the ground was grazed bare and the water fouled by their animals, while they themselves were gone. Auda searched for their tracks, but could find none: the wind-storms had swept the sand face into clean new ripples. However, if we went away northward, we should find them.

The following day, despite the interminable lapse of time, was only our fourteenth from Wejh; and its sun rose upon us again marching, over flats of limestone and sand, towards a distant corner of the Great Nefudh, the famous belts of sand-dune which cut off Jebel Shammar from the Syrian Desert. Palgrave, the Blunts, and Gertrude Bell amongst the storied travellers had crossed it, and I begged Auda to bear off a little and let us enter it, and their company: but he growled that men went to the Nefudh only of necessity, when raiding, and that the son of his father did not raid on a tottering, mangy camel. Our business was to reach Arfaja alive.

So we wisely marched on, over monotonous, glittering sand; and over those worse stretches, "Giaan," of polished mud, nearly as white and smooth as laid paper, and often whole miles square. They blazed back the sun into our faces with glassy vigour, so we rode with its light raining direct arrows upon our heads, and its reflection glancing up from the ground through our inadequate eyelids. It was not a steady pressure, but a pain ebbing and flowing; at one time piling itself up and up till we nearly swooned; and then falling away coolly, in a moment of false shadow like a black web crossing the retina: these gave us a moment's breathing space to store new capacity for suffering, like the struggles to the surface of a drowning man. We grew short-answered to one another; but relief came toward six o'clock, when we halted for supper, and baked ourselves fresh bread.

After dark we crawled for three hours, reaching the top of a sand ridge. There we slept thankfully, after a bad day of burning wind, dust blizzards, and drifting sand which stung our inflamed faces, and at times, in the greater gusts, wrapped the sight of our road from us and drove our complaining camels up and down. But Auda was anxious about the morrow, for another hot head-wind would delay us a third day in the desert, and we had no water left: so he called us early in the night, and we marched down into the plain of the Bisaita (so called in derision, for its huge size and flatness), before day broke. Its fine surface-litter of sun-browned flints was restfully dark after sunrise for our streaming eyes, but hot and hard going for our camels, some of which were already limping with sore feet.

Camels brought up on the sandy plains of the Arabian coast had delicate pads to their feet and if such animals were taken suddenly inland for long marches over flints or other heat-retaining ground, their soles would burn, and at last crack in a blister; leaving quick flesh, two inches or more across, in the centre of the pad. In this state they could march as ever over sand; but if, by chance, the foot came down on a pebble, they would stumble, or flinch as though they had stepped on fire, and in a long march might break down altogether unless they were very brave. So we rode carefully, picking the softest way, Auda and myself in front.

As we went, some little puffs of dust scurried into the eye of the wind. Auda said they were ostriches. A man ran up to us with two great ivory eggs. We settled to breakfast on this

bounty of the Biseita, and looked for fuel; but in twenty minutes found only a wisp of grass. The barren desert was defeating us. The baggage train passed, and my eye fell on the loads of blasting gelatine. We broached a packet, shredding it carefully into a fire beneath the egg propped on stones, till the cookery was pronounced complete. Nasir and Nesib, really interested, dismounted to scoff at us. Auda drew his silver-hilted dagger and chipped the top of the first egg. A stink like a pestilence went across our party. We fled to a clean spot, rolling the second hot egg before us with gentle kicks. It was fresh enough, and hard as a stone. We dug out its contents with the dagger on to the flint flakes which were our platters, and ate it piece-meal; persuading even Nasir, who in his life before had never fallen so low as egg-meat, to take his share. The general verdict was:—tough and strong, but good in the Biseita.

Zaal saw an oryx; stalked it and killed it. The better joints were tied upon the baggage camels for the next halt, and our march continued. Afterwards the greedy Howeitat saw more oryx in the distance and went after the beasts, who foolishly ran a little; then stood still and stared till the men were near, and, too late, ran away again. Their white shining bellies betrayed them; for, by the magnification of the mirage, they winked each move to us from afar.

I was too weary, and too little sporting, to go out of the straight way for all the rare beasts in the world; so I rode after the caravan, which my camel overhauled quickly with her longer stride. At the tail of it were my men, walking. They feared that some of their animals would be dead before evening, if the wind blew stronger, but were leading them by hand in hope of getting them in. I admired the contrast between Mohammed the lusty, heavy-footed peasant, and the lithe Ageyl, with Farraj and Daud dancing along, barefooted, delicate as thoroughbreds. Only Gasim was not there: they thought him among the Howeitat, for his surliness offended the laughing soldiery and kept him commonly with the Beduin, who were more of his kidney.

There was no one behind, so I rode forward wishing to see how his camel was: and at last found it, riderless, being led by one of the Howeitat. His saddlebags were on it, and his rifle and his food, but he himself nowhere; gradually it dawned on us that the miserable man was lost. This was a dreadful business, for in the haze and mirage the caravan could not be seen two

miles, and on the iron ground it made no tracks: afoot he would never overtake us.

Every one had marched on, thinking him elsewhere in our loose line; but much time had passed and it was nearly mid-day, so he must be miles back. His loaded camel was proof that he had not been forgotten asleep at our night halt. The Ageyl ventured that perhaps he had dozed in the saddle and fallen, stunning or killing himself: or perhaps some one of the party had borne him a grudge. Anyway they did not know. He was an ill-natured stranger, no charge on any of them, and they did not greatly care.

True: but it was true also that Mohammed, his countryman and fellow, who was technically his road-companion, knew nothing of the desert, had a foundered camel, and could not turn back for him.

I looked weakly at my trudging men, and wondered for a moment if I could change with one, sending him back on my camel to the rescue. My shirking the duty would be understood, because I was a foreigner: but that was precisely the plea I did nôt dare set up, while I yet presumed to help these Arabs in their own revolt. It was hard, anyway, for a stranger to influence another people's national movement, and doubly hard for a Christian and a sedentary person to sway Moslem nomads. I should make it impossible for myself if I claimed, simultaneously, the privileges of both societies.

So, without saying anything, I turned my unwilling camel round, and forced her, grunting and moaning for her camel friends, back past the long line of men, and past the baggage into the emptiness behind. My temper was very unheroic, for I was furious with my other servants, with my own play-acting as a Beduin, and most of all with Gasim, a gap-toothed, grumbling fellow, skrimshank in all our marches, bad-tempered, suspicious, brutal, a man whose engagement I regretted, and of whom I had promised to rid myself as soon as we reached a discharging place. It seemed absurd that I should peril my weight in the Arab adventure for a single worthless man.

My camel seemed to feel it also, by her deep grumbling; but that was a constant recourse of ill-treated camels. After a mile or two, she felt better, and began to go forward less constrainedly, but still slowly. I had been noting our direction all these days

with my oil compass, and hoped, by its aid, to return nearly to our starting place, seventeen miles away.

I had ridden about an hour and a half, easily, for the following breeze had let me wipe the crust from my red eyes and look forward almost without pain: when I saw a figure, or large bush, or at least something black ahead of me. The shifting mirage disguised height or distance; but this thing seemed moving, a little east of our course. On chance I turned my camel's head that way, and in a few minutes saw that it was Gasim. When I called he stood confusedly; I rode up and saw that he was nearly blinded and silly, standing there with his arms held out to me, and his black mouth gaping open. The Ageyl had put our last water in my skin, and this he spilled madly over his face and breast, in haste to drink. He stopped babbling, and began to wail out his sorrows. I sat him, pillion, on the camel's rump; then stirred her up and mounted.

At our turn the beast seemed relieved, and moved forward freely. In spite of our double weight she began to stride out, and at times even put her head down and for a few paces developed that fast and most comfortable shuffle to which the best animals, while young, were broken by skilled riders. This proof of reserve spirit in her rejoiced me, as did the little time lost in search.

Gasim was moaning impressively about the pain and terror of his thirst: I told him to stop; but he went on, and began to sit loosely; until at each step of the camel he bumped down on her hinder quarters with a crash, which, like his crying, spurred her to greater pace. There was danger in this, for we might easily founder her so. Again I told him to stop, and when he only screamed the louder, hit him and swore that for another sound I would throw him off. The threat, to which my general rage gave colour, worked. After it he clung on grimly without sound.

Not four miles had passed when again I saw a black bubble, lunging and swaying in the mirage ahead. It split into three, and swelled. I wondered if they were enemy. A minute later the haze unrolled with the disconcerting suddenness of illusion; and it was Auda with two of Nasir's men come back to look for me. I yelled jests and scoffs at them for abandoning a friend in the desert. Auda pulled his beard and grumbled that had he been present I would never have gone back. Gasim was trans-

ferred with insults to a better rider's saddle-pad, and we ambled forward together.

In an hour we rejoined Nasir and Nesib in the van. Nesib was vexed with me for perilling the lives of Auda and myself on a whim. It was clear to him that I reckoned they would come back for me. Nasir was shocked at his ungenerous outlook, and Auda was glad to rub into a townsman the paradox of tribe and city; the collective responsibility and group-brotherhood of the desert, contrasted with the isolation and competitive living of the crowded districts.

Over this little affair hours had passed, and the rest of the day seemed not so long; though the heat became worse, and the sand-blast stiffened in our faces till the air could be seen and heard, whistling past our camels like smoke. The ground was flat and featureless till five o'clock, when we saw low mounds ahead, and a little later found ourselves in comparative peace, amid sand-hills coated slenderly with tamarisk. These were the Kaseim of Sirhan. The bushes and the dunes broke the wind, it was sunset, and the evening mellowed and reddened on us from the west. So I wrote in my diary that Sirhan was beautiful.

Having not a mouthful of water we of course ate nothing: which made it a continent night. Yet the certainty of drink on the morrow let us sleep easily, lying on our bellies to prevent the inflation of foodlessness. Arab habit was to fill themselves to vomiting point at each well, and either to go dry to the next; or, if they carried water, to use it lavishly at the first halt, drinking and bread-making.

Next morning we rode down slopes, over a first ridge, and a second, and a third; each three miles from the other; till at eight o'clock we dismounted by the wells of Arfaja, the sweet-smelling bush, so called, being fragrant all about us. The unlined wells were dug about eighteen feet, to water creamy to the touch with a powerful smell and brackish taste. We found it delicious, and since there was greenstuff about, good for camel food, decided to stay here the day.

NOMADS AND NOMAD LIFE

WE WERE now five weeks out from Wejh; we had spent nearly all the money we had brought with us: we had eaten all the Howeitat sheep: we had rested or replaced all our old camels: nothing hindered the start. The freshness of the adventure in hand consoled us for everything; and Auda, importing more mutton, gave a farewell feast, the greatest of the whole series, in his huge tent the eve before we started. Hundreds were present, and five fills of the great tray were eaten up in relay as fast as they were cooked and carried in.

Sunset came down, delightfully red, and after the feast the whole party lay round the outside coffee hearth lingering under the stars, while Auda and others told us stories. In a pause I remarked casually that I had looked for Mohammed el Dheilan in his tent that afternoon, to thank him for the milch camel he had given me, but had not found him. Auda shouted for joy, till everybody looked at him; and then, in the silence which fell that they might learn the joke, he pointed to Mohammed sitting dismally beside the coffee mortar, and said in his huge voice:—

"Ho! Shall I tell why Mohammed for fifteen days has not slept in his tent?" Everybody chuckled with delight, and conversation stopped; all the crowd stretched out on the ground, chins in hands, prepared to take the good points of the story which they had heard perhaps twenty times. The women, Auda's three wives, Zaal's wife, and some of Mohammed's, who had been cooking, came across, straddling their bellies in the billowy walk which came of carrying burdens on their heads, till they were near the partition-curtain; and there they listened like the rest while Auda told at length how Mohammed had bought publicly in the bazaar at Wejh a costly string of pearls, and had not given it to any of his wives, and so they were all at odds, except in their common rejection of him.

The story was, of course, a pure invention—Auda's elvish humour heightened by the stimulus of Revolt—and the luckless

Mohammed, who had dragged through the fortnight guesting casually with one or other of the tribesmen, called upon God for mercy, and upon me for witness that Auda lied. I cleared my throat solemnly. Auda asked for silence, and begged me to confirm his words.

I began with the introducing phrase of a formal tale: "In the name of God the merciful, the loving-kind. We were six in Wejh. There were Auda, and Mohammed, and Zaal, Gasim el Shimt, Mufaddhi and the poor man (myself); and one night just before dawn, Auda said, 'Let us make a raid against the market.' And we said, 'In the name of God.' And we went; Auda in a white robe and a red headcloth, and Kasim sandals of pieced leather; Mohammed in a silken tunic of 'seven kings' and barefoot; Zaal . . . I forget Zaal. Gasim wore cotton, and Mufaddhi was in silk of blue stripes with an embroidered headcloth. Your servant was as your servant."

My pause was still with astonishment. This was a close parody of Auda's epic style; and I mimicked also his wave of the hand, his round voice, and the rising and dropping tone which emphasized the points, or what he thought were points, of his pointless stories. The Howeitat sat silent as death, twisting their full bodies inside their sweat-stiffened shirts for joy, and staring hungrily at Auda; for they all recognized the original, and parody was a new art to them and to him. The coffee man, Mufaddhi, a Shammar refugee from the guilt of blood, himself a character, forgot to pile fresh thorns on his fire for fixity of listening to the tale.

I told how we left the tents, with a list of the tents, and how we walked down towards the village, describing every camel and horse we saw, and all the passers-by, and the ridges, "all bare of grazing, for by God that country was barren. And we marched: and after we had marched the time of a smoked cigarette, we heard something, and Auda stopped and said, 'Lads, I hear something.' And Mohammed stopped and said, 'Lads, I hear something.' And Zaal, 'By God, you are right.' And we stopped to listen, and there was nothing, and the poor man said, 'By God, I hear nothing.' And Zaal said, 'By God, I hear nothing.' And Mohammed said, 'By God, I hear nothing.' And Auda said, 'By God, you are right.'

"And we marched and we marched, and the land was barren, and we heard nothing. And on our right hand came a man, a

negro, on a donkey. The donkey was grey, with black ears, and one black foot, and on its shoulder was a brand like this" (a scrabble in the air), "and its tail moved and its legs: Auda saw it, and said, 'By God, a donkey.' And Mohammed said, 'By the very God, a donkey and a slave.' And we marched. And there was a ridge, not a great ridge, but a ridge as great as from the here to the what-do-you-call-it (*lil biliyeh el hok*) that is yonder: and we marched to the ridge and it was barren. That land is barren: barren: barren.

"And we marched: and beyond the what-do-you-call-it there was a what-there-is as far as hereby from thence, and thereafter a ridge: and we came to that ridge, and went up that ridge: it was barren, all that land was barren: and as we came up that ridge, and were by the head of that ridge, and came to the end of the head of that ridge, by God, by my God, by very God, the sun rose upon us."

It ended the session. Every one had heard that sunrise twenty times, in its immense bathos; an agony piled up of linked phrases, repeated and repeated with breathless excitement by Auda to carry over for hours the thrill of a raiding story in which nothing happened; and the trivial rest of it was exaggerated the degree which made it like one of Auda's tales; and yet, also, the history of the walk to market at Wejh which many of us had taken. The tribe was in waves of laughter on the ground.

Auda laughed the loudest and longest, for he loved a jest upon himself; and the fatuousness of my epic had shown him his own sure mastery of descriptive action. He embraced Mohammed, and confessed the invention of the necklace. In gratitude Mohammed invited the camp to breakfast with him in his regained tent on the morrow, an hour before we started for the swoop on Akaba. We should have a sucking camel-calf boiled in sour milk by his wives: famous cooks, and a legendary dish!

We started an hour before noon on June 19, 1917. Nasir led us, riding his Ghazala—a camel vaulted and huge-ribbed as an antique ship; towering a good foot above the next of our animals, and yet perfectly proportioned, with a stride like an ostrich's—a lyrical beast, noblest and best bred of the Howeitat camels, a female of nine remembered dams. Auda was beside him, and I skirmished about their gravities on Naama, "the hen-ostrich," a racing camel and my last purchase. Behind me rode my Ageyl, with Mohammed, the clumsy. Mohammed was now compan-

ioned by Ahmed, another peasant, who had been for six years living among the Howeitat by force of his thews and wits—a knowing eager ruffian.

Our present party totalled more than five hundred strong; and the sight of this jolly mob of hardy, confident northerners chasing gazelle wildly over the face of the desert, took from us momentarily all sorry apprehension as to the issue of our enterprise. We felt it was a rice-night, and the chiefs of the Abu Tayi came to sup with us. Afterwards, with the embers of our coffee fire pleasantly red between us against the cool of this upland north-country, we sat about on the carpets chatting discursively of this remote thing and that.

Nasir rolled over on his back, with my glasses, and began to study the stars, counting aloud first one group and then another; crying out with surprise at discovering little lights not noticed by his unaided eye. Auda set us on to talk of telescopes—of the great ones—and of how man in three hundred years had so far advanced from his first essay that now he built glasses as long as a tent, through which he counted thousands of unknown stars, "And the stars—what are they?" We slipped into talk of suns beyond suns, sizes and distance beyond wit. "What will now happen with this knowledge?" asked Mohammed. "We shall set to, and many learned and some clever men together will make glasses as more powerful than ours, as ours than Galileo's; and yet more hundreds of astronomers will distinguish and reckon yet more thousands of now unseen stars, mapping them, and giving each one its name. When we see them all, there will be no night in heaven."

"Why are the Westerners always wanting all?" provokingly said Auda. "Behind our few stars we can see God, who is not behind your millions." "We want the world's end, Auda." "But that is God's," complained Zaal, half angry. Mohammed would not have his subject turned. "Are there men on these greater worlds?" he asked. "God knows." "And has each the Prophet and heaven and hell?" Auda broke in on him. "Lads, we know our districts, our camels, our women. The excess and the glory are to God. If the end of wisdom is to add star to star our foolishness is pleasing." And then he spoke of money, and distracted their minds till they all buzzed at once. Afterwards he whispered to me that I must get him a worthy gift from Feisal when he won Akaba.

We marched at dawn, and presently Auda told me he was riding ahead to Bair, and would I come? We went fast, and in two hours came upon the place suddenly, under a knoll. Auda had hurried on to visit the tomb of his son Annad, who had been waylaid by five of his Motalga cousins in revenge for Abtan, their champion, slain by Annad in single combat. Auda told me how Annad had ridden at them, one against five, and had died as he should; but it left only little Mohammed between him and childlessness. He had brought me along to hear him greatly lament his dead.

However, as we rode down towards the graves, we were astonished to see smoke wreathing from the ground about the wells. We changed direction sharply, and warily approached the ruins. It seemed there was no one there; but the thick dungcake round the well-brink was charred, and the well itself shattered at the top. The ground was torn and blackened as if by an explosion; and when we looked down the shaft we saw its steyning stripped and split, and many blocks thrown down the bore half choking it and the water in the bottom. I sniffed the air and thought the smell was dynamite.

Auda ran to the next well, in the bed of the valley below the graves; and that, too, was ragged about the head and choked with fallen stones. "This," said he, "is Jazi work." We walked across the valley to the third—the Beni Sakhr—well. It was only a crater of chalk. Zaal arrived, grave at sight of the disaster. We explored the ruined khan, in which were night-old traces of perhaps a hundred horse. There was a fourth well, north of the ruins in the open flat, and to it we went hopelessly, wondering what would become of us if Bair were all destroyed. To our joy it was uninjured.

This was a Jazi well, and its immunity gave strong colour to Auda's theory. We were disconcerted to find the Turks so ready, and began to fear that perhaps they had also raided El Jefer, east of Maan, the wells at which we planned to concentrate before we attacked. Their blocking would be a real embarrassment. Meanwhile, thanks to the fourth well, our situation, though uncomfortable, was not dangerous. Yet its water facilities were altogether insufficient for five hundred camels; so it became imperative to open the least damaged of the other wells—that in the ruins, about whose lip the turf smouldered. Auda and I went off with Nasir to look again at it.

An Ageyli brought us an empty case of Nobel's gelignite, evidently the explosive which the Turks had used. From scars in the ground it was clear that several charges had been fired simultaneously round the well-head, and in the shaft. Staring down it till our eyes were adjusted to its dark, we suddenly saw many niches cut in the shaft less than twenty feet below. Some were still tamped, and had wires hanging down.

Evidently there was a second series of charges, either inefficiently wired, or with a very long time-fuse. Hurriedly we unrolled our bucket-ropes, twined them together, and hung them freely down the middle of the well from a stout cross-pole, the sides being so tottery that the scrape of a rope might have dislodged their blocks. I then found that charges were small, not above three pounds each, and had been wired in series with field telephone cable. But something had gone wrong. Either the Turks had scamped their job or their scouts had seen us coming before they had had time to re-connect.

So we soon had two fit wells, and a clear profit of thirty pounds of enemy gelignite. We determined to stay a week in this fortunate Bair. A third object—to discover the condition of the Jefer wells—was now added to our needs for food, and for news of the state of mind of the tribes between Maan and Akaba. We sent a man to Jefer. We prepared a little caravan of pack-camels with Howeitat brands and sent them across the line to Tafileh with three or four obscure clansmen—people who would never be suspected of association with us. They would buy all the flour they could and bring it back to us in five or six days' time.

As for the tribes about the Akaba road, we wanted their active help against the Turks to carry out the provisional plan we had made at Wejh. Our idea was to advance suddenly from El Jefer, to cross the railway-line and to crown the great pass—Nagb el Shtar—down which the road dipped from the Maan plateau to the red Guweira plain. To hold this pass we should have to capture Aba el Lissan, the large spring at its head, about sixteen miles from Maan; but the garrison was small, and we hoped to overrun it with a rush. We would then be astride the road, whose posts at the end of the week should fall from hunger; though probably before that the hill tribes, hearing of our successful beginning, would join us to wipe them out.

The crux of our plan was the attack on Aba el Lissan, lest the force in Maan have time to sally out, relieve it, and drive us off

the head of Shtar. If, as at present, they were only a battalion, they would hardly dare move; and should they let it fall while waiting for reinforcements to arrive, Akaba would surrender to us, and we should be based on the sea and have the advantageous gorge of Itm between us and the enemy. So our insurance for success was to keep Maan careless and weak, not suspecting our malevolent presence in the neighbourhood.

It was never easy for us to keep our movements secret, as we lived by preaching to the local people, and the unconvinced would tell the Turks. Our long march into Wadi Sirhan was known to the enemy, and the most civilian owl could not fail to see that the only fit objective was Akaba. The demolition of Bair (and Jefer, too, for we had it confirmed that the seven wells of Jefer were destroyed) showed that the Turks were to that extent on the alert.

It might be that Jefer really was denied to us; but we were not without hope that there too we should find the technical work of demolition ill-done by these pitiful Turks. Dhaif-Allah, a leading man of the Jazi Howeitat, one who came down to Wejh and swore allegiance, had been present in Jefer when the King's Well was fired by dynamite placed about its lip; and sent us secret word from Maan that he had heard the upper stones clap together and key over the mouth of the well. His conviction was that the shaft was intact, and the clearing of it a few hours' work. We hoped so; and rode away from Bair all in order, on the twenty-eighth of June, to find out.

Quickly we crossed the weird plain of Jefer. Next day by noon we were at the wells. They seemed most thoroughly destroyed; and the fear grew that we might find in them the first check to our scheme of operations, a scheme so much too elaborate that a check might be far reaching.

However, we went to the well—Auda's family property—of which Dhaif-Allah had told us the tale, and began to sound about it. The ground rang hollow under our mallet, and we called for volunteers able to dig and build. Some of the Ageyl came forward, led by the Mirzugi, a capable camel boy of Nasir's. They started with the few tools we had. The rest of us formed a ring round the well-depression and watched them work, singing to them and promising rewards of gold when they had found the water.

It was a hot task in the full glare of the summer sun; for the

Jefer plain was of hard mud, flat as the hand, blinding white with salt, and twenty miles across; but time pressed, because if we failed we might have to ride fifty miles in the night to the next well. So we pushed the work by relays at speed through the mid-day heat, turning into labourers all our amenable fellows. It made easy digging, for the explosion which shifted the stones had loosened the soil.

As they dug and threw out the earth, the core of the well rose up like a tower of rough stones in the centre of the pit. Very carefully we began to take away the ruined head of the pile: difficult work, for the stones had become interlocked in their fall; but this was the better sign, and our spirits rose. Before sunset the workers shouted that there was no more packing soil, that the interstices between the blocks were clear, and that they heard the mud fragments which slipped through splashing many feet below.

Half an hour later came a rush and rumble of stones in the mouth, followed by a heavy splash and yells. We hurried down, and by the Mirzugi's torch saw the well yawning open, no longer a tube, but a deep bottle-shouldered pit, twenty feet across at the bottom, which was black with water and white in the middle with spray where the Ageyli who had been clearing when the key slipped, was striking out lustily in the effort not to drown. Everybody laughed down the well at him, till at last Abdulla lowered him a noose of rope, and we drew him up, very wet and angry, but in no way damaged by his fall.

We rewarded the diggers, and feasted them on a weak camel, which had failed in the march to-day; and then all night we watered, while a squad of Ageyl, with a long chorus, steyned up to ground-level an eight-foot throat of mud and stones. At dawn the earth was stamped in round this, and the well stood complete, as fit in appearance as ever. Only the water was not very much. We worked it the twenty-four hours without rest, and ran it to a cream; and still some of our camels were not satisfied.

From Jefer we took action. Riders went forward into the Dhumaniyeh tents to lead their promised attack against Fuweilah, the block-house which covered the head of the pass of Aba el Lissan. Our attack was planned for two days before the weekly caravan which, from Maan replenished the client garrisons.

Starvation would make reduction of these distant places easier, by impressing on them how hopelessly they were cut off from their friends.

We sat in Jefêr meanwhile, waiting to hear the fortune of the attack. On its success or failure would depend the direction of our next march. The halt was not unpleasant, for our position had its comic side. We were within sight of Maan, during those minutes of the day in which the mirage did not make eyes and glasses useless; and yet we strolled about admiring our new well-lip in complete security, because the Turkish garrison believed water impossible here or at Bair, and were hugging the pleasant idea that we were now desperately engaged with their cavalry in Sirhan.

I hid under some bushes near the well for hours, against the heat, very lazy, pretending to be asleep, the wide silk sleeve of my pillow-arm drawn over my face as veil against the flies. Auda sat up and talked like a river, telling his best stories in great form. At last I reproved him with a smile, for talking too much and doing too little. He sucked his lips with pleasure of the work to come.

In the following dawn a tired horseman rode into our camp with news that the Dhumaniyeh had fired on the Fuweilah post the afternoon before as soon as our men had reached them. The surprise had not been quite complete; the Turks manned their dry stone breastworks and drove them off. The crestfallen Arabs drew back into cover, and the enemy, believing it only an ordinary tribal affray had made a mounted sortie upon the nearest encampment.

One old man, six women and seven children were its only occupants. In their anger at finding nothing actively hostile or able-bodied, the troopers smashed up the camp and cut the throats of its helpless ones. The Dhumaniyeh on the hill-tops heard and saw nothing till it was too late; but then, in their fury, they dashed down across the return road of the murderers and cut them off almost to the last man. To complete their vengeance they assaulted the now weakly-garrisoned fort, carried it in the first fierceness of their rush, and took no prisoners.

We were ready saddled; and within ten minutes had loaded and marched for Ghadir el Haj, the first railway station south of Maan, on our direct road for Aba el Lissan. Simultaneously, we detached a small party to cross the railway just above Maan

and create a diversion on that side. Especially they were to threaten the great herds of sick camels, casualties of the Palestine front, which the Turks pastured in the Shobek plains till once more fit for service.

We calculated that the news of their Fuweilah disaster would not have reached Maan till the morning, and that they could not drive in these camels (supposing our northern party missed them) and fit out a relief expedition, before nightfall; and if we were then attacking the line at Ghadir el Haj, they would probably divert the relief thither, and so let us move on Akaba unmolested.

With this hope we rode steadily through the flowing mirage till afternoon, when we descended on the line; and, having delivered a long stretch of it from guards and patrols, began on the many bridges of the captured section. The little garrison of Ghadir el Haj sallied out with the valour of ignorance against us, but the heat-haze blinded them, and we drove them off with loss.

They were on the telegraph, and would notify Maan, which beside, could not fail to hear the repeated thuds of our explosive. It was our aim to bring the enemy down upon us in the night; or rather down here, where they would find no people but many broken bridges, for we worked fast and did great damage. The drainage holes in the spandrils held from three to five pounds of gelatine each. We, firing our mines by short fuses, brought down the arch, shattered the pier, and stripped the side walls, in no more than six minutes' work. So we ruined ten bridges and many rails, and finished our explosive.

After dusk, when our departure could not be seen, we rode five miles westward of the line, to cover. There we made fires and baked bread. Our meal, however, was not cooked before three horsemen cantered up to report that a long column of new troops—infantry and guns—had just appeared at Aba el Lissan from Maan. The Dhumaniyeh, disorganized with victory, had had to abandon their ground without fighting. They were at Batra waiting for us. We had lost Aba el Lissan, the blockhouse, the pass, the command of the Akaba road: without a shot being fired.

We learned afterwards that this unwelcome and unwonted vigour on the part of the Turks was accident. A relief battalion had reached Maan that very day. The news of an Arab demonstration against Fuweilah arrived simultaneously; and the battalion, which happened to be formed up ready with its transport

in the station yard, to march to barracks, was hurriedly strengthened by a section of pack artillery and some mounted men, and moved straight out as a punitive column to rescue the supposedly-besieged post.

They had left Maan in mid-morning and marched gently along the motor road, the men sweating in the heat of this south country after their native Caucasian snows, and drinking thirstily of every spring. From Aba el Lissan they climbed uphill towards the old blockhouse, which was deserted except for the silent vultures flying above its walls in slow uneasy rings. The battalion commander feared lest the sight be too much for his young troops, and led them back to the roadside spring of Aba el Lissan, in its serpentine narrow valley, where they camped all night in peace about the water.

FIGHTING TO THE SEA

Such news shook us into quick life. We threw our baggage across our camels on the instant and set out over the rolling downs of this end of the tableland of Syria. Our hot bread was in our hands, and, as we ate, there mingled with it the taste of the dust of our large force crossing the valley bottoms, and some taint of the strange keen smell of the wormwood which overgrew the slopes. In the breathless air of these evenings in the hills, after the long days of summer, everything struck very acutely on the senses: and when marching in a great column, as we were, the front camels kicked up the aromatic dust-laden branches of the shrubs, whose scent-particles rose into the air and hung in a long mist, making fragrant the road of those behind.

The slopes were clean with the sharpness of wormwood, and the hollows oppressive with the richness of their stronger, more luxuriant growths. Our night-passage might have been through a planted garden, and these varieties part of the unseen beauty of successive banks of flowers. The noises too were very clear. Auda broke out singing, away in front, and the men joined in from time to time, with the greatness, the catch at heart, of an army moving into battle.

We rode all night, and when dawn came were dismounting on the crest of the hills between Batra and Aba el Lissan, with a wonderful view westwards over the green and gold Guweira plain, and beyond it to the ruddy mountains hiding Akaba and the sea. Gasim abu Dumeik, head of the Dhumaniyeh, was waiting anxiously for us, surrounded by his hard-bitten tribesmen, their grey strained faces flecked with the blood of the fighting yesterday. There was a deep greeting for Auda and Nasir. We made hurried plans, and scattered to the work, knowing we could not go forward to Akaba with this battalion in possession of the pass. Unless we dislodged it, our two months' hazard and effort would fail before yielding even first-fruits.

Fortunately the poor handling of the enemy gave us an unearned advantage. They slept on, in the valley, while we crowned the hills in wide circle about them unobserved. We began to snipe them steadily in their positions under the slopes and rock-faces by the water, hoping to provoke them out and up the hill in a charge against us. Meanwhile, Zaal rode away with our horsemen and cut the Maan telegraph and telephone in the plain.

This went on all day. It was terribly hot—hotter than ever before I had felt it in Arabia—and the anxiety and constant moving made it hard for us. Some even of the tough tribesmen broke down under the cruelty of the sun, and crawled or had to be thrown under rocks to recover in their shade. We ran up and down to supply our lack of numbers by mobility, ever looking over the long ranges of hill for a new spot from which to counter this or that Turkish effort. The hill-sides were steep, and exhausted our breath, and the grasses twined like little hands about our ankles as we ran, and plucked us back. The sharp reefs of limestone which cropped out over the ridges tore our feet, and long before evening the more energetic men were leaving a rusty print upon the ground with every stride.

Our rifles grew so hot with sun and shooting that they seared our hands; and we had to be grudging of our rounds, considering every shot, and spending great pains to make it sure. The rocks on which we flung ourselves for aim were burning, so that they scorched our breasts and arms, from which later the skin drew off in ragged sheets. The present smart made us thirst. Yet even water was rare with us; we could not afford men to fetch enough from Batra, and if all could not drink, it was better that none should.

We consoled ourselves with knowledge that the enemy's enclosed valley would be hotter than our open hills: also that they were Turks, men of white meat, little apt for warm weather. So we clung to them, and did not let them move or mass or sortie out against us cheaply. They could do nothing valid in return. We were no targets for their rifles, since we moved with speed, eccentrically. Also, we were able to laugh at the little mountain guns which they fired up at us. The shells passed over our heads, to burst behind us in the air; and yet, of course, for all that they could see from their hollow place, fairly amongst us above the hostile summits of the hill.

Just after noon I had a heat-stroke, or so pretended, for I was dead weary of it all, and cared no longer how it went. So I crept into a hollow where there was a trickle of thick water in a muddy cup of the hills, to suck some moisture off its dirt through the filter of my sleeve. Nasir joined me, panting like a winded animal, with his cracked and bleeding lips shrunk apart in his distress: and old Auda appeared, striding powerfully, his eyes bloodshot and staring, his knotty face working with excitement.

He grinned with malice when he saw us lying there, spread out to find coolness under the bank, and croaked at me harshly, "Well, how is it with the Howeitat? All talk and no work?" "By God, indeed," spat I back again, for I was angry with every one and with myself, "they shoot a lot and hit a little." Auda almost pale with rage, and trembling, tore his headcloth off and threw it on the ground beside me. Then he ran back up the hill like a madman, shouting to the men in his dreadful strained and rustling voice.

They came together to him, and after a moment scattered away down hill. I feared things were going wrong, and struggled to where he stood alone on the hill-top, glaring at the enemy: but all he would say to me was, "Get your camel if you want to see the old man's work." Nasir called for his camel and we mounted.

The Arabs passed before us into a little sunken place, which rose to a low crest; and we knew that the hill beyond went down in a facile slope to the main valley of Aba el Lissan, somewhat below the spring. All our four hundred camel men were here tightly collected, just out of sight of the enemy. We rode to their head, and asked the Shimt what it was and where the horsemen had gone.

He pointed over the ridge to the next valley above us, and said, "With Auda there": and as he spoke yells and shots poured up in a sudden torrent from beyond the crest. We kicked our camels furiously to the edge, to see our fifty horsemen coming down the last slope into the main valley like a run-away, at full gallop, shooting from the saddle. As we watched, two or three went down, but the rest thundered forward at marvellous speed, and the Turkish infantry, huddled together under the cliff ready to cut their desperate way out towards Maan in the first dusk, began to sway in and out, and finally broke before the rush, adding their flight to Auda's charge.

Nasir screamed at me, "Come on," with his bloody mouth; and

we plunged our camels madly over the hill, and down towards the head of the fleeing enemy. The slope was not too steep for a camel-gallop, but steep enough to make their pace terrific, and their course uncontrollable: yet the Arabs were able to extend to right and left and to shoot into the Turkish brown. The Turks had been too bound up in the terror of Auda's furious charge against their rear to notice us as we came over the eastward slope: so we also took them by surprise and in the flank; and a charge of ridden camels going nearly thirty miles an hour was irresistible.

The Howeitat were very fierce, for the slaughter of their women on the day before had been a new and horrible side of warfare suddenly revealed to them. So there were only a hundred and sixty prisoners, many of them wounded; and three hundred dead and dying were scattered over the open valleys.

A few of the enemy got away, the gunners on their teams, and some mounted men and officers with their Jazi guides. Mohammed el Dheilan chased them for three miles into Mreigha, hurling insults as he rode, that they might know him and keep out of his way. The feud of Auda and his cousins had never applied to Mohammed, the political-minded, who showed friendship to all men of his tribe when he was alone to do so. Among the fugitives was Dhaif-Allah, who had done us the good turn about the King's Well at Jefer.

Auda came swinging up on foot, his eyes glazed over with the rapture of battle, and the words bubbling with incoherent speed from his mouth. "Work, work, where are words, work, bullets, Abu Tayi" . . . and he held up his shattered field-glasses, his pierced pistol-holster, and his leather sword-scabbard cut to ribbons. He had been the target of a volley which had killed his mare under him, but the six bullets through his clothes had left him scathless.

He told me later, in strict confidence, that thirteen years before he had bought an amulet Koran for one hundred and twenty pounds and had not since been wounded. Indeed, Death had avoided his face, and gone scurvily about killing brothers, sons and followers. The book was a Glasgow reproduction, costing eighteenpence; but Auda's deadliness did not let people laugh at his superstition.

He was wildly pleased with the fight, most of all because he had confounded me and shown what his tribe could do. Moham-

med was wroth with us for a pair of fools, calling me worse than Auda, since I had insulted him by words like flung stones to provoke the folly which had nearly killed us all: though it had killed only two of us, one Rueili and one Sherari.

It was, of course, a pity to lose any one of our men, but time was of importance to us, and so imperative was the need of dominating Maan, to shock the little Turkish garrisons between us and the sea into surrender, that I would have willingly lost much more than the two. On occasions like this Death justified himself and was cheap.

Meanwhile our Arabs had plundered the Turks, their baggage train, and their camp; and soon after moonrise, Auda came to us and said that we must move. It angered Nasir and myself. To-night there was a dewy west wind blowing, and at Aba el Lissan's four thousand feet, after the heat and burning passion of the day, its damp chill struck very sharply on our wounds and bruises. The spring itself was a thread of silvery water in a runnel of pebbles across delightful turf, green and soft, on which we lay, wrapped in our cloaks, wondering if something to eat were worth preparing: for we were subject at the moment to the physical shame of success, a reaction of victory, when it became clear that nothing was worth doing, and that nothing worthy had been done.

Auda insisted. Partly it was superstition—he feared the newly-dead around us; partly lest the Turks return in force; partly lest other clans of the Howeitat take us, lying there broken and asleep. Some were his blood enemies: others might say they came to help our battle, and in the darkness thought we were Turks and fired blindly. So we roused ourselves, and jogged the sorry prisoners into line.

Most had to walk. Some twenty camels were dead or dying from wounds which they had got in the charge, and others were over weak to take a double burden. The rest were loaded with an Arab and a Turk; but some of the Turkish wounded were too hurt to hold themselves on pillion. In the end we had to leave about twenty on the thick grass beside the rivulet, where at least they would not die of thirst, though there was little hope of life or rescue for them.

Nasir set himself to beg blankets for these abandoned men, who were half-naked; and while the Arabs packed, I went off down the valley where the fight had been, to see if the dead had

any clothing they could spare. But the Beduin had been beforehand with me, and had stripped them to the skin. Such was their point of honour.

To an Arab an essential part of the triumph of victory was to wear the clothes of an enemy: and next day we saw our force transformed (as to the upper half) into a Turkish force, each man in a soldier's tunic: for this was a battalion straight from home, very well found and dressed in new uniforms.

In the end our little army was ready, and wound slowly up the height and beyond into a hollow sheltered from the wind; and there, while the tired men slept, we dictated letters to the Sheikhs of the coastal Howeitat, telling them of the victory, that they might invest their nearest Turks, and hold them till we came. We had been kind to one of the captured officers, a policeman despised by his regular colleagues, and him we persuaded to be our Turkish scribe to the commandants of Guweira, Kethera and Hadra, the three posts between us and Akaba, telling them that if our blood was not hot we took prisoners, and that prompt surrender would ensure their good treatment and safe delivery to Egypt.

This lasted till dawn, and then Auda marshalled us for the road, and led us up the last mile of soft heath-clad valley between the rounded hills. It was intimate and home-like till the last green bank; when suddenly we realized it was the last, and beyond lay nothing but clear air. The lovely change this time checked me with amazement; and afterwards, however often we came, there was always a catch of eagerness in the mind, a pricking forward of the camel and straightening up to see again over the crest into openness.

Shtar hill-side swooped away below us for hundreds and hundreds of feet, in curves like bastions, against which summer-morning clouds were breaking: and from its foot opened the new earth of the Guweira plain. Aba el Lissan's rounded limestone breasts were covered with soil and heath, green, well watered. Guweira was a map of pink sand, brushed over with streaks of watercourses, in a mantle of scrub: and, out of this, and bounding this, towered islands and cliffs of glowing sandstone, wind-scarped and rain-furrowed, tinted celestially by the early sun.

After days of travel on the plateau in prison valleys, to meet this brink of freedom was a rewarding vision, like a window in the wall of life. We walked down the whole zigzag pass of

Shtar, to feel its excellence, for on our camels we rocked too much with sleep to dare see anything. At the bottom the animals found a matted thorn which gave their jaws pleasure; we in front made a halt, rolled on to sand soft as a couch, and incontinently slept.

Auda came. We pleaded that it was for mercy upon our broken prisoners. He replied that they alone would die of exhaustion if we rode, but if we dallied, both parties might die: for truly there was now little water and no food. However, we could not help it, and stopped that night short of Guweira, after only fifteen miles. At Guweira lay Sheikh ibn Jad, balancing his policy to come down with the stronger: and to-day we were the stronger, and the old fox was ours. He met us with honeyed speeches. The hundred and twenty Turks of the garrison were his prisoners: we agreed with him to carry them at his leisure and their ease to Akaba.

To-day was the fourth of July. Time pressed us, for we were hungry, and Akaba was still far ahead behind two defences. The nearer post, Kethira, stubbornly refused parley with our flags. Their cliff commanded the valley—a strong place which it might be costly to take. We assigned the honour, in irony, to ibn Jad and his unwearied men, advising him to try it after dark. He shrank, made difficulties, pleaded the full moon: but we cut hardly into this excuse, promising that to-night for awhile there should be no moon. By my diary there was an eclipse. Duly it came, and the Arabs forced the post without loss, while the superstitious soldiers were firing rifles and clanging copper pots to rescue their threatened satellite.

Reassured we set out across the strand-like plain. Niazi Bey, the Turkish battalion commander, was Nasir's guest, to spare him the humiliation of Beduin contempt. Now he sidled up by me, and, his swollen eyelids and long nose betraying the moroseness of the man, began to complain that an Arab had insulted him with a gross Turkish word. I apologized, pointing out that it must have been learnt from the mouth of one of his Turkish fellow-governors. The Arab was repaying Cæsar.

Cæsar, not satisfied, pulled from his pocket a wizened hunch of bread to ask if it was fit breakfast for a Turkish officer. My heavenly twins, foraging in Guweira, had bought, found, or stolen a Turkish soldier's ration loaf; and we had quartered it. I said it was not breakfast, but lunch and dinner, and perhaps to-

morrow's meals as well. I, a staff officer of the British Army (not less well fed than the Turkish) had eaten mine with the relish of victory. It was defeat, not bread, which stuck in his gullet, and I begged him not to blame me for the issue of a battle imposed on both our honours.

The narrows of Wadi Itm increased in intricate ruggedness as we penetrated deeper. Below Kethira we found Turkish post after Turkish post, empty. Their men had been drawn in to Khadra, the entrenched position (at the mouth of Itm), which covered Akaba so well against a landing from the sea. Unfortunately for them the enemy had never imagined attack from the interior, and of all their great works not one trench or post faced inland. Our advance from so new a direction threw them into panic.

In the afternoon we were in contact with this main position, and heard from the local Arabs that the subsidiary posts about Akaba had been called in or reduced, so that only a last three hundred men barred us from the sea. We dismounted for a council, to hear that the enemy were resisting firmly, in bomb-proof trenches with a new artesian well. Only it was rumoured that they had little food.

No more had we. It was a deadlock. Our council swayed this way and that. Arguments bickered between the prudent and the bold. Tempers were short and bodies restless in the incandescent gorge whose granite peaks radiated the sun in a myriad shimmering points of light, and into the depths of whose tortuous bed no wind could come to relieve the slow saturation of the air with heat.

Our numbers had swollen double. So thickly did the men crowd in the narrow space, and press about us, that we broke up our council twice or thrice, partly because it was not good they should overhear us wrangling, partly because in the sweltering confinement our unwashed smells offended us. Through our heads the heavy pulses throbbed like clocks.

We sent the Turks summonses, first by white flag, and then by Turkish prisoners, but they shot at both. This inflamed our Beduin, and while we were yet deliberating a sudden wave of them burst up on to the rocks and sent a hail of bullets spattering against the enemy. Nasir ran out barefooted, to stop them, but after ten steps on the burning ground screeched for sandals; while I crouched in my atom of shadow, too wearied of these

men (whose minds all wore my livery) to care who regulated their febrile impulses.

We had a third try to communicate with the Turks, by means of a little conscript, who said that he understood how to do it. We walked down close to the trenches with him, and sent in for an officer to speak with us. After some hesitation this was achieved, and we explained the situation on the road behind us; our growing forces; and our short control over their tempers. The upshot was that they promised to surrender at daylight. So we had another sleep (an event rare enough to chronicle) in spite of our thirst.

Next day at dawn fighting broke out on all sides, for hundreds more hill-men, again doubling our number, had come in the night; and, not knowing the arrangement, began shooting at the Turks, who defended themselves. Nasir went out, with ibn Dgheithir and his Ageyl marching in fours, down the open bed of the valley. Our men ceased fire. The Turks then stopped, for their rank and file had no more fight in them and no more food, and thought we were well supplied. So the surrender went off quietly after all.

As the Arabs rushed in to plunder I noticed an engineer in grey uniform, with red beard and puzzled blue eyes; and spoke to him in German. He was the well-borer, and knew no Turkish. Recent doings had amazed him, and he begged me to explain what we meant. I said that we were a rebellion of the Arabs against the Turks. This, it took him time to appreciate. He wanted to know who was our leader. I said the Sherif of Mecca. He supposed he would be sent to Mecca. I said rather to Egypt. He inquired the price of sugar, and when I replied, "cheap and plentiful," he was glad.

The loss of his belongings he took philosophically, but was sorry for the well, which a little work would have finished as his monument. He showed me where it was, with the pump only half-built. By pulling on the sludge bucket we drew enough delicious clear water to quench our thirsts. Then we raced through a driving sandstorm down to Akaba, four miles further, and splashed into the sea on July the sixth, just two months after our setting out from Wejh.

THREE-DAYS' BATTLE

BY WALTER NOBLE BURNS

FROM "THE SAGA OF BILLY THE KID"

THE most dramatic moment in the true history of Billy the Kid, the youthful cowboy outlaw whose battles, captures, loves, escapes and duels are one of the great sagas of the Southwest.

THE THREE-DAYS' BATTLE

THE hush of a July night lay upon Lincoln. The dark, silent town seemed asleep under the peaceful stars.

But behind the bastion-like walls of the Murphy store warlike preparations were toward. Within the deep seclusion of Murphy's old office Sheriff Peppin held council with Jimmy Dolan, Marion Turner, John Kinney, Andy Boyle, Old Man Pearce, and other leaders of the Murphy faction.

"We've got the Kid at last," declared Peppin. "There ain't no way for him to get away. We'll get him this time, dead or alive."

The Kid, with half-a-dozen other McSween partisans, fresh from the fight at Chisum's South Spring Ranch, had ridden in a few hours before and taken refuge in the McSween residence. Deputy Sheriff Turner, with twenty-five men, having trailed him all the way from the Pecos, had arrived in Lincoln a little later.

"With Turner's posse, we've got sixty men in all," said Peppin. "Nineteen Americans, the rest Mexicans. All good fighters. The Kid ain't got no idea how many of us he's got to fight. He thinks he'll have easy picking. But he's in a trap. We'll spring it on him."

"There's enough of us to rush the McSween house," advised Dolan.

"No use in that," cautioned Kinney. "We got the Kid dead to rights without takin' no chances."

"The Kid's a wise hombre," reflected Peppin. "If we propose that he surrender, I believe, under the circumstances, he'll listen to reason."

"That's right," cut in Old Man Pearce. "He's liable to get some of us if we shoot it out with him."

But how to open negotiations with the Kid was a problem. The man who attempted a parley might acquire a bullet.

"I think I know how," said Turner.

With Dolan and Kinney, Turner slipped into the bottom land along the Bonito River and crept up behind the McSween barn. There, standing sheltered from possible shots, he set up a lusty hailing cry. To this halloo, the Kid responded through a crack in the kitchen door.

"We've got you surrounded, Kid," shouted Turner. "If you make a fight, we'll kill you all to the last man. If you'll surrender, we'll promise you won't be hurt."

Something that sounded suspiciously like laughter came from the crack in the kitchen door.

"It's no joke, Kid. You better surrender."

"Surrender to a bunch of hounds like you? What six kinds of a fool do you think I am?"

"We'll guarantee you protection."

"I'll stay where I am and protect myself. If you want me, come and get me. Go back to your gang and tell 'em to turn on the fireworks. We're ready for you."

Out of the east end of town came a rumble of horses' hoofs, a chorus of zipping yells, scattered shots. Turner and his companions did not wait to learn the cause but, breaking short the conference, rejoined Sheriff Peppin. Faction Leader McSween had ridden into town from his

camp on the Ruidoso with a tail of thirty-five Mexican fighting men at his back.

When Turner and his posse rode in from Roswell, Martin Chavez, deputy under Sheriff Copeland and a McSween partisan, had spurred hard for McSween's camp to carry the news of the Kid's perilous predicament. Forthwith, McSween and his henchmen had mounted in haste and come to Lincoln on the run. This strong reinforcement materially altered the situation, which thereafter did not look so dark. Under cover of the night, McSween and several of his Mexican allies slipped into the McSween home without drawing enemy fire and joined the Kid, who welcomed them with no little enthusiasm.

The Murphy forces held the Murphy store and hotel. The buildings were in the west end of town within fifty yards of the McSween house, the hotel on the same side of the street, the store on the other. High on the hillsides on the south side of the cañon, Murphy sharpshooters commanded the entire village.

The McSween men under Chavez garrisoned the Montaña and Patron houses in the east end of Lincoln. Charlie Bowdre, George Coe, and Hendry Brown were posted in the McSween store, a little to the west of the McSween house. With McSween in his home were Billy the Kid, Tom O'Folliard, Jim French, Doc Skurlock, Harvey Morris, Francisco Semora, Ignacio Gonzales, Vincente Romero, José Chavez y Chavez, and Ygenio Salazar. Three women also were in the house—Mrs. McSween, Mrs. Elizabeth Shield, her sister, and Mrs. Ealy, wife of the Presbyterian minister whom McSween had brought out to Lincoln from the East and who held services every Sunday in the McSween store.

With the long vendetta about to break in murderous

battle climax, McSween still leaned upon the Lord for divine intervention that would avert the tragedy that was now inevitable. He spent the night in prayer. On his knees in his room, he talked with God as if face to face and pleaded for the miracle. "Touch, O Lord, the hearts of our enemies with Thy goodness and mercy. . . . Guide them in the better way. . . . Send down Thy blessing of peace."

When Billy the Kid and the others gathered for breakfast next morning they were in high spirits and ready for battle. With witty sallies and gay bantering talk they inspected their rifles and six-shooters. Mrs. McSween, Mrs. Shield, and Mrs. Ealy bustled between kitchen and dining room loading the table with steaming dishes. McSween entered with his Bible in his hand.

There was in his appearance the solemnity and austerity of an ancient prophet. His tall, spare form was erect with the serene courage of one who fancies himself panoplied by angels. His face, pale from his sleepless vigil, shone with supreme and abiding faith. In his eyes was a look of apocalyptic vision as of one who sees beyond earthly horizons the loom of "opal towers and battlements adorned of living sapphire." Taking his place at the head of the table, he bowed his head in his hand and said grace.

Came a crash of rifles from the Murphy clan shooting from the windows of the Murphy store and hotel. The balls thudded against the adobe walls of the McSween house and tore ragged holes through the window shutters, bursting the panes and scattering fragments of glass over the floor.

A look of pained surprise for an instant swept McSween's face. He had prayed for peace. Bullets were his answer.

"Where's your gun, Mr. McSween?" queried the Kid.

"I have no gun," replied McSween. "I have never owned one. I have never fired one in my life."

"But you'll lend a hand and do some fighting now?"

"God forbid."

"But we're in for it good and plenty. We've got to fight for our lives. Every man will count."

"I would rather die than stain my soul with the blood of my fellow man," replied McSween with deep solemnity. "I have no need to commit that great sin. God is my refuge and strength. He will protect me."

A cynical smile twisted a corner of the Kid's mouth.

"All right, governor," he returned good-naturedly. "Go ahead and trust in the Lord. The rest of us'll trust in our six-shooters."

He threw open the shutters, useless for defense. Through the open windows, he and his men replied to the volleys of the enemy.

The battle developed quickly all along the line. While the Murphy forces hidden in store and hotel concentrated their fusillades on the McSween home, their sharpshooters, ranging along the hills at the south side of the cañon, poured an incessant fire upon Chavez's men in the Montaña and Patron houses.

"Kind of a tame fight," remarked the Kid as the day of random firing drew toward a close. "Those Murphy fellows stay under cover. I can't get a good, square crack at anybody. We better sneak out of here to-night and join up with Chavez. Then we can chase the Murphy gang out of town."

"We will stay where we are," said McSween. "We must free our hearts of hatred and deadliness. 'Vengeance is mine,' saith the Lord. We must remain on the

defensive. I still have faith that God will put a stop to this sad affair before blood has been spilled."

In view of McSween's attitude, the Kid had apprehensions that the battle might lengthen into a siege. After darkness had fallen, he brought indoors two barrels of rain-water standing in the sheltered court. These would provide the little garrison with enough water for drinking and cooking purposes for a number of days.

McSween's faith was strengthened and renewed when the fighting ceased for the night without loss of life on either side. It seemed to him a Heaven-given sign that his prayers had been heard. He returned thanks to God on his knees and went to bed beside his Bible. . . .

Among the rocks on the steep hill that rose above the Montaña and Patron houses crawled Lucio Montoya and Charlie Crawford, crack riflemen of the Murphy faction. They settled into position side by side behind two huge boulders. Below them in the early morning sunlight lay the silent town, its long, winding street blocked and striped with the shadows of houses, trees, and fence-posts.

"Not a soul in sight," observed Crawford. "Town looks like nobody lived in it."

"All the people scared to come out," replied Montoya.

A quarter of a mile away they could see the McSween house, its adobe stucco chipped and scarred by bullets. Smoke began to ascend from its chimney.

"McSween's cooking breakfast."

"*Si, compadre.*"

"We're in a good spot. Ought to be able to pick off some of them Chavez fellers from here."

"*Mira, amigo!*" Montoya's voice rose scarcely above a whisper.

Martin Chavez emerged from the Patron house and

started to walk across the short space that separated it from the Montaña dwelling.

Montoya and Crawford snapped their rifles into position. Two bullets knocked up the ground at Chavez's feet.

"Darn poor shootin', I call that," said Crawford.

"Purty far," replied Montoya philosophically.

"Well, pard, let's wake 'em up."

They began to fire steadily. For hours they kept it up. Through the windows and doors of the two houses that sheltered Chavez's men crashed the bullets of the concealed marksmen.

Fernando Herrera of Chavez's command was famed among his people for his skill with a rifle. For a long time he scrutinized the hillside through a pair of field glasses. At every shot, Crawford and Montoya for an instant showed head and shoulders at exactly the same spot from behind their boulders.

Through a crack in the back door of the Montaña house Herrera drew a bead with his long-range buffalo rifle upon the spot at which Crawford would appear. He waited for a moment with his finger on the trigger. Crawford's rifle worked into position from behind the rock. His right shoulder appeared. His head came into view as he sighted along the barrel. Whang! Herrera's bullet went singing upward across the intervening space of nine hundred yards—afterward measured. It struck the hammer of Crawford's gun, veered at a slight angle, and ploughed through his body, breaking his back. Crawford's yell echoed up and down the cañon. He catapulted into the air, tumbled off a ledge, and came rolling and plunging down to the bottom of the hill. He fetched up on a level space at the edge of a field of standing corn which shielded

him from sight of his enemies. There, wounded to the death, he lay in the broiling sun all day. He was dead when a searching party found him at night.

Montoya was Herrera's next problem, and he solved it in the same way. Herrera trained his rifle through the crack in the door on the spot at which he calculated Montoya would appear. He had not long to wait. Possibly Montoya was a little excited over the wounding of his comrade, possibly a little eager to avenge the injury. He was a little less cautious than had been his wont. When next he made ready to fire, he exposed half his body in a half-kneeling position, an elbow resting on one knee to steady his aim. Again Herrera's rifle cracked, again his bullet buzzed like an angry bumblebee across the wide gap of air, and Montoya collapsed behind his boulder with a shattered leg. There he, too, lay for the remainder of the day, groaning in agony, the hot sun beating upon him.

Crawford's death yell sounded with piercing shrillness in the McSween home.

"One less Murphy man," commented the Kid with a note of satisfaction. "They sure got that fellow."

But the cry of agony filled McSween's soul with awe and foreboding. Had his prayers been in vain? Would God withhold the miracle?

"I do not like that," he said. "Let us hope the poor man has not been killed. A God of love will not turn a deaf ear to my supplications. Out of the darkness He will speak and bring peace."

"Here's a rifle, Mr. McSween," said the Kid, thrusting a gun toward him. "Straight shooting will do more good than prayer."

But McSween raised his hand with a gesture of abhorrence.

"Never!" he exclaimed. "I will not be tempted into such ungodliness."

Colonel N. A. M. Dudley, commandant, sat in his office at Fort Stanton, busy with the day's routine. Through the window he saw a woman, bedraggled and plainly labouring under great excitement, hurrying toward him across the parade ground. In a moment she burst into the room like an apparition, pale, wild of eye, her clothing torn.

"For God's sake, bring your soldiers to Lincoln." Her voice was almost a scream. "The clans are fighting. This is the third day. They will fight till the last man is killed. Dead are lying in the street. The women and children will be murdered. The town will be destroyed. The people are afraid. They are cooped up in their homes. I am Mrs. Juanita Mills. I could not stand it any longer. I slipped out of town before dawn and have hurried on foot across the hills—nine miles. I have come to beg you to save us—the mothers, the babies, our homes. Only the troops can stop this madness. There is still time. But hurry. For God's sake, hurry."

The morning silence was shattered by the bugles. "Boots and Saddles" set the echoes flying among the hills. There was instant bustle of preparation. Scurrying officers shouted commands. Troopers in broken streaks began to converge toward the stables. Two squadrons of Negro cavalry, with two gatling guns and Colonel Dudley in command, were soon moving at double-quick on the road to Lincoln.

Murphy lookouts on watch at the upper windows of the Murphy store caught sight of a cloud of dust rising to the west in the direction of the Double Crossing of the

Bonito. Puzzled as to what it might portend, they summoned Sheriff Peppin. A strong body of horsemen was approaching. But who were they? The Murphy leaders were expecting no reinforcements. If the riders under that cloud of dust were McSween partisans, the Murphy faction would better lose no time in taking to the hills. Their cause was lost.

"Fetch me my field glasses," Peppin called to one of his under-strappers.

The Murphy sheriff took a quick squint through the glasses. His weather-beaten face broke in the parchment-like wrinkles of a smile. The riddle was solved.

"Soldiers! Colonel Dudley is bringing in his old army buffalo troopers. I don't know what he aims to do. But it's all right, boys. He's our friend."

Soon the long, blue-uniformed column, rounding a bend in the road, came marching into Lincoln, sabres clanking, carbines unslung, Colonel Dudley and his officers riding ahead. Two gatling guns rolled smoothly along between the squadrons, awe-inspiring weapons in that day, mysterious in their lethal capability, efficient in slithering death. A train of four-mule wagons loaded with tenting and camp equipment brought up the rear.

As the cavalcade clattered past the Murphy store, cheers came with muffled faintness from the abysmal depths of the old building, those who lifted joyous voices not daring to show themselves at the windows for fear a random McSween volley might cut short their enthusiasm. Colonel Dudley halted his command in front of the McSween home, a few days before the smartest house in town, decrepit-looking now, grown venerable overnight from the batterings of battle. He sent an aide inside to summon McSween.

While the black troopers lounged at ease in their saddles, Murphy men came pouring into the road from their store and hotel fortresses and crowded about the McSween home. There was no danger now. They were under the ægis of the army. No McSween partisan was so desperate as to dare to flout the majesty of Uncle Sam by a pot-shot at Murphy foes. Nor were the beleaguered guardians of the McSween stronghold backward in curiosity. They, too, swarmed into the road and stood silent in front of the building, awaiting developments, their rifles resting in the crook of their arms, their restless eyes keeping suspicious watch upon their enemies.

Obedient to Colonel Dudley's summons, McSween stepped out the door of his home, halted at the throat-latch of the colonel's charger, and stood facing the stern-visaged soldier sitting rigidly erect in his saddle.

"Mister McSween," said Colonel Dudley in stentorian tones.

But Jimmy Dolan did not wait to hear the import of the message Colonel Dudley was about to deliver to "Mister McSween." In the excitement aroused by the halting of the cavalry squadrons in front of the McSween home, Jimmy Dolan recognized an opportunity. He slipped unnoticed through the crowd along the line of troops toward the Murphy hotel, picking up Old Man Pearce, Charlie Hall, and that harum-scarum old ruffian and blackguard, Andy Boyle, on his way.

"It's our chance, boys," he said in cautious undertones. "Quick now. Come with me."

For a few brief moments the four conspirators rummaged about the hotel and its purlieus. Then they plunged down an embankment behind the hostelry and, hidden from view from the road, went at a run across the

bottoms of the Bonito. Up the embankment they scrambled in the rear of the McSween barn and so came at last into the McSween backyard. In one hand Dolan carried a can of kerosene and in the other a tin cup. Andy Boyle brought a wash basket filled with shavings and chips. Old Man Pearce and Charlie Hall bore armloads of kindling and faggots of pitch pine.

The column of troops was standing at ease in the road fifty feet away. Billy the Kid and his fighting men, Mrs. McSween, Mrs. Shield, Mrs. Ealy, every member of the McSween garrison, were at the front of the house. McSween still stood at the throat-latch of the colonel's charger. The back of the house was deserted. In the rapt silence of the moment, Colonel Dudley's every word rang clear to the four men at their secret business in McSween's backyard.

"Mr. McSween," said Colonel Dudley in stentorian tones, "this fighting must end at once."

"I am powerless to end it," replied McSween.

"You must cease firing," ordered Colonel Dudley.

"Pile on your kindling, Pearce," said Jimmy Dolan. "That's the stuff. Now your pitch pine, Hall. That's good."

"I will be glad to cease firing," responded McSween, "if the Murphy faction ceases also. The Murphy side started this battle. We are besieged—besieged in my own home. We are fighting for our lives. End the attack upon us and you will end the battle."

"Stand back a little, boys," said Jimmy Dolan. "Give me a chance to souse on the coal oil."

Over the mass of shavings, kindling, and pitch pine piled high against McSween's back door Dolan slashed the kerosene. Filling his tin cup, he dashed quantities

over door and lintels from top to bottom. On the sills of the windows he spread shavings and saturated them with oil. Over the window shutters and every piece of woodwork he threw cupfuls of the inflammable liquid until his can was empty.

"I have given you my orders, Mr. McSween." Colonel Dudley's voice had in it the ring of finality. "See that they are obeyed. Stop your fighting or suffer the consequences."

The colonel turned to his bugler with a sharp command.

"Now, strike your matches and touch her off," said Jimmy Dolan.

The staccato notes of the bugle sounded in the street. "Forward!" sang the trumpet. There was a rattle of arms as the troopers straightened to attention and dressed their ranks. The column got slowly under way.

The oil-drenched pile exploded into a mass of fire that shot up to the roof. As Dolan and his companions sprang down the embankment into the bottom-lands, a thin veil of blue-white fire was rippling and shimmering over door and window shutters. Fiery little tongues were curling eagerly about the woodwork as if relishing appetizing food. Slender red streamers that flashed to the shingles of the roof waved and fluttered like pennons of victory.

Clatter of accoutrements, pounding of hoofs, creaking of gun carriages, grew faint in the distance, fainter still, and ceased. Whitish smoke, soft, billowy, rose from the roof of the McSween home and drifted in a lurid mist into the empty street.

No sooner had the cavalry column got in motion than McSween and his group of home-defenders hurried back inside the house.

"Old Dudley made it plain as daylight that we must

stop shooting," sneered Billy the Kid. "But I notice he didn't tell the Murphy gang to cease firing. Why not? They were standing all around him."

Mrs. McSween sniffed the air suspiciously.

"I smell smoke," she cried. "What can be burning?"

She hurried into the next room. The acrid smell of fire was more distinct. As she passed through the door into the room beyond, a blue shadowy snake of smoke wriggled slowly toward her in midair.

"Fire!"

The men rushed after her. As they darted into the back room they stopped short, hardly able to breathe. Through the thick swirls they saw the door and the shutters of the windows crumbling in charred fragments beneath the flames. As they stood there in momentary daze a section of the roof came crashing down in blazing ruin upon the floor. In an instant the situation of the little garrison had rushed to desperate crisis. The house that had been their refuge and fortress had been transformed into a death trap.

Beleaguered by the deadly rifles of their foes, they now had a more dangerous enemy to fight. There might yet be time to save the building. They rushed to the two barrels of rain water. Pitiful supply it was with which to battle a conflagration. In pails and kettles and dishpans, they carried water to dash upon the flames. The hopelessness of their task was soon apparent. The back room was now a fiery furnace. The walls were bellying outward with the heat; the partition was tottering. Flames were leaping and crackling along the roof. Black smoke was boiling into the sky.

The McSween residence was of one story, built of adobe brick about three sides of a court that was open at the

rear. It contained twelve rooms, four in the main portion which fronted on the street, four in the west wing, four in the east wing. Dolan and his destroying angels had kindled the fire at the rear of the west wing. A wind from the east was blowing the flames and sparks away from the other part of the house. If the wind held, the destruction of the entire building could be compassed only when the flames had passed from back to front of the west wing, across the front, and from front to back of the east wing.

After the fire had reached the interior through the collapse of portions of the roof, its progress was rapid. McSween's men ceased to fight it, seeing the futility of their efforts, and turned their attention to saving the furniture, hustling it from one room to another in advance of the flames.

Mrs. McSween's piano in the front room on the west side of the house was in the direct path of destruction. Famous instrument—the only piano in all eastern New Mexico—whose music had cheered all Lincoln; to whose melodies the boys and girls of the town had danced in the street; whose wagon-borne journey across mountains and plains had been a royal progress; and whose arrival had marked a red-letter day in Lincoln's calendar.

"Save my piano," wailed Mrs. McSween. "Let the fire rob me of everything else, but save my precious piano."

The men took hold with a will and in the crisis Billy the Kid won new laurels as a piano-mover. From room to room across the front of the building they lifted and dragged the instrument laboriously, and landed it in the front room on the east side, far from the flames.

"There!" cried Mrs. McSween joyously. "It's safe—safe, at least, for the time being."

In her passing flash of happiness, she sat at the instru-

ment and let her fingers wander among the keys. Snatches of old tunes took form beneath her touch like fugitive ghosts. Before she knew it she was playing "Home, Sweet Home." She sang a bar or two softly—"There's no place like home." The music seemed the voice of her tragedy. Her home was burning. In a little while, with all its associations of love and happiness, it would be a mere heap of ashes and blackened timbers. As the last note trembled into silence, she bowed her head upon the piano and her tears dropped upon the keys.

There was a crash at the west side of the house. Portions of the red-hot adobe walls had fallen outward leaving two great gaps. Through the gaps the Murphy men rained bullets. . . . McSween read a chapter in the Bible and offered up a prayer. . . . Billy the Kid and his little band, half-blinded by whirls of smoke, pumped their Winchesters. . . . A fragment of the roof caved in, narrowly missing the Kid. He stepped to one side with a smile. A Murphy bullet knocked a cigarette from between his lips. "Now that's too bad," he said cheerfully. "I'll have to roll another."

"Colonel Dudley is our only hope, boys," said Mrs. McSween at last. "That's almost no hope at all. I have no faith in him. But he is the only one who can save us now. The cowards of the Murphy crowd are watching and waiting to murder us all. Soon there will be no walls left to hide us. Then we must die unless help comes. Colonel Dudley can rescue us if he will—if he will. I'm going to his camp and ask him—beg him on my knees—to save us."

She caught up her bonnet and put it on—adjusted it neatly on her head, saw that it was on straight.

"You must not go, my dear," said McSween. "The

Murphy men will kill you as soon as you step out the door."

"I'm going!"

She flung open the door and walked out. A cloud of smoke swooped down around her. Out of it she passed into the sunlight. Rifles began to crack from windows in the Murphy store. Bullets struck all about her. She paid no heed. She did not turn her head. A rifle ball struck so close it scattered dust over her skirt. She paused for a moment, stooped and brushed off the dust. Then she marched on down the road.

Colonel Dudley had gone into camp on open ground in the east end of town opposite San Juan Church, and having trained his gatling guns on the Montaña and Patron houses, sent for Martin Chavez in command of the McSween force garrisoning these two buildings.

"You see those guns?" Colonel Dudley said, pointing to the two pieces whose shining barrels bore upon the houses from directly across the road.

"*Si, señor,* I see," responded Chavez.

"If they should accidentally go off, they might blow those two houses down and kill your men."

"But, possibly, I do not understan'. You bring your soldiers for protec' life and property, no?"

"Exactly. That's what I'm here for. If your men fire another shot, the accident I spoke of may happen at any moment."

Chavez gave a shrug.

"It is best that you withdraw from Lincoln," Colonel Dudley continued. "I will grant you safe conduct out of town. But be sure you do not return or linger in the outskirts. If you take any further part in the fighting, I will send a troop of cavalry after you."

Chavez and his men thereupon mounted their horses which had been kept in the stables of the Ellis house and rode out of town, Colonel Dudley keeping them covered all the while with his gatling guns. The retreat of Chavez left McSween and the ten men with him to fight out the battle alone. Mrs. McSween was the only woman left in her home. Mrs. Shields and Mrs. Ealy had already taken advantage of the screen of troops halted in front of the residence to seek safety with friends in another part of town.

When, several hours after Chavez's departure Mrs. McSween made her way to Colonel Dudley's tent, she found him sitting with Sheriff Peppin and John Kinney, of the Murphy faction.

"Well," said Colonel Dudley, looking at her coldly. "What is it you want?"

"You are aware, Colonel Dudley," said Mrs. McSween, "that my home is burning down?"

"I have seen some smoke," replied Colonel Dudley indifferently.

"While you were giving your orders to my husband, Murphy men set my house on fire."

"I would require proof of that."

"There is no doubt about it. But I did not come to argue with you. It is too late now to save my home. I have come to beg you to save our lives. You hear the volleys the Murphy men are pouring into my blazing home. Unless you stop this attack upon us, my husband and the ten men with him will be killed."

"I have no authority to interfere," replied Colonel Dudley.

"Then," said Mrs. McSween, gasping in amazement, "why have you brought your troops into Lincoln?"

"I am here," returned the colonel sharply, "to assume charge only in case the situation escapes from the control of the civil authorities."

"'Civil authorities!'" echoed Mrs. McSween. "Who, pray, are these 'civil authorities'?"

"Sheriff Peppin here and the deputies under him."

"Sheriff Peppin is a Murphy partisan," Mrs. McSween flung back. "He is directing the attack upon us."

"Your men refused to surrender when called upon."

"If they had surrendered, they would have been massacred."

"I do not think so."

"The purpose of these 'civil authorities,' as you call them, is to murder us all. If the present situation does not warrant your interference, I can conceive of no situation which would. Force these lawless and conscienceless 'civil authorities' to stop their efforts to murder us. Let my home burn to the ground, but send your troops to save the lives of Mr. McSween and his men. Arrest them if necessary and give them protection as your prisoners."

"I am in command of United States troops," Colonel Dudley answered. "This is a civil matter——"

"It is barbarous!" cried Mrs. McSween.

"—and Sheriff Peppin seems to have the situation in hand. I will not interfere. I have no authority."

"So this is what it means to appeal to a soldier in the uniform of my country," shouted Mrs. McSween, now white with passion. "If my country's flag that flies in front of your tent cannot protect us, then God help us."

She returned to her home and groped back through the smoke into the flame-bright interior. The west wing and front of the house were gutted, blackened ruins. The fire

was sweeping back over the east wing, the last remaining portion.

"Dudley refuses to interfere," she announced hopelessly.

Silence fell upon the doomed men, broken only by the crackling of the fire and the crash of charred timbers. For a long time Mrs. McSween paced the floor, wringing her hands.

"Dudley must interfere," she said at last as if to herself. "We are lost unless he does. Only the soldiers can save us. I am going back to fight it out with him."

She picked her way through the blazing embers out into the road once more. A roar of laughter came from Colonel Dudley's tent as she entered the camp. Evidently someone had told the soldier a good joke. Colonel Dudley was still with Sheriff Peppin and John Kinney. He seemed disconcerted as Mrs. McSween stepped into his tent. A bottle and glasses were on his table.

"You here again?"

"I have come again to beg you on my knees to save my husband's life and the lives of the men with him. Have you no mercy?"

"I have told you I have no authority to interfere."

Fury boiled in Mrs. McSween's soul at these words that closed the door of hope against her.

"Colonel Dudley," she screamed, "that is not true. You have the authority but you will not use it. I know, and we all know, what you are here for. You are here not to protect life and property but to help the Murphy faction. You have driven out of town Chavez and his men who might have helped us. You have left the Murphy side in control. They are not 'civil authorities' and

you know it. They intend to murder us and you will stand by and see them do it."

Colonel Dudley grew purple with rage. "Get out of my tent," he stormed.

"I will not go," Mrs. McSween hurled back, "until you send your soldiers with me to save my husband's life."

"Orderly," called Colonel Dudley to a trooper on guard in front of his tent, "put this woman out of the encampment."

The orderly caught Mrs. McSween by the arm and led her into the road. There she halted.

"I will not budge another step," she said stubbornly, "until I have one last word with Colonel Dudley."

The orderly argued, protested, threatened, but Mrs. McSween stood firm. He hurried back to Colonel Dudley's tent and reported. But the colonel remained inside. Mrs. McSween determined upon a ruse. She began to shriek at the top of her lungs. The cañon echoed with her screams. Fearing some calamity had befallen her, Colonel Dudley came bounding from his tent to see what the matter was. Before he could plunge back, Mrs. McSween had her opportunity for a woman's last word.

"Colonel Dudley," she shrilled, "I am going back to see my home burned over my head and my husband murdered; but as long as I live, I will not leave a stone unturned to fasten on you the guilt of this great crime."

The day was now far spent. Shadows of evening were falling across the cañon. The McSween home was almost destroyed. Of its twelve rooms, only three remained. Mrs. McSween's announcement that all hope of aid was gone threw into despondency all members of the band except Billy the Kid, who for so many weary hours in the doomed house had been fighting fire and foes. As

desperate in his optimism as in his crimes, the Kid received the news with an indifferent shrug. The one chance in a million that remained to him kept him cheerfully hopeful. He wasted no words in bewailing his fate in being cooped in this two-by-four hell. Confident in his own resources and courage, he was willing to play the game out to the end and, if luck went against him, accept the result like a good gambler.

Mrs. McSween's eyes rested sadly on her piano. Flame reflections were leaping and dancing in its polished depths. It was fated to destruction. A few hours more and it would be a wreck buried under flaming débris.

She threw herself upon the stool at the keyboard. She still had hope—hope in Billy the Kid and his fighting men. They were battling desperately in their last ditch. A war-song might inspire them to still more heroic courage. It might turn defeat into victory. With one last brave swan-song before the ultimate silence, the piano might yet save the day. At once she plunged into the stirring bars of "The Star-Spangled Banner." Facing death, the men felt the lift and thrill of the old battle hymn. "O say, can you see . . . what so proudly we hailed at the twilight's last gleaming . . . broad stripes and bright stars through the perilous fight . . . so gallantly streaming. . . ." The Kid whistled the tune. Tom O'Folliard beat time with his six-shooter. Far through the noise of battle and the swish of flames, the music sounded in half the homes in Lincoln. It rang against the cañon walls like a challenge. It carried its message of courage and defiance to the enemy whose bullets thumped like an obbligato against the tottering walls and plunged with sibilant uproar among the smoking embers . . . "does the Star-Spangled Banner still

wave o'er the land" . . . The music died in the crash of a flaming fragment of the roof.

"You'd better hunt safety now, Mrs. McSween," said Billy the Kid. "Go to the house of some friend while there's still time. We'll do the best we can. We may get out of this yet. After dark, we'll make a break for it."

"Yes," agreed McSween. "While there is still time. Escape for the others will be less difficult if there is no woman here."

"I will not go," the brave woman proclaimed stoutly.

"It is best, my dear," answered McSween.

He folded her in his arms and kissed her good-bye.

"Let me stay and die with you," she pleaded.

McSween shook his head solemnly. "No, you must go."

Mrs. McSween turned away. Her husband drew her back for one last embrace.

"God watch over and protect you," he breathed.

Broken-hearted and blinded by tears, Mrs. McSween stumbled out of the blazing ruins of her home, through the dense smoke into the road flaming with the sunset to find safety and shelter at last with her sister and Mrs. Ealy.

Night fell. Two rooms were left. The Kid and his men still clung to their crumbling defenses. The fire marched steadily forward. One room remained—the kitchen. It was ten o'clock. With the roof blazing over their heads, the Kid and his men prepared for a dash for safety. The Kid gave his directions calmly. Certain men must go first; certain others must follow in order.

The Murphy men had closed in under cover of the darkness. They crouched behind the McSween stable and beneath the shelter of the adobe wall that shut off

the stable lot from the backyard. They sensed the approaching crisis. Their rifles commanded the kitchen door at a distance of not more than ten yards.

"All right, boys, let's go," cried the Kid. "We've still got one chance in a million."

He threw open the back door. While the flames turned night into day, Harvey Morris and Francisco Semora rushed out to fall dead before a blaze of rifles from the adobe wall. Vincente Romero was the next to try and the next to die.

McSween was sitting in a corner, his Bible open on his lap, his lips moving in prayer. The tragedy closing in about him had left him in a state between lethargy and religious ecstasy. He realized that all hope was gone. Fear did not touch him. He felt only the despair and disappointment of a martyr whose faith had been in vain, whose prayers had not been answered. The Kid laid a hand upon his shoulder and shook him out of his reverie.

"Come on, governor," said the Kid with a flash of his gay courage, "it's your turn next. You've got to make a run for it."

McSween rose slowly to his feet.

"Take this gun." The Kid tried to shove a six-shooter into his hand. With a sweep of his long arm, McSween brushed the weapon aside. He had remained unarmed throughout the fighting. He would die as he had lived, with no stain upon his soul.

"Hit the trail, old man," shouted the Kid. "Go through that door like a streak of greased lightning. Head for the back fence. Roll over it in the dark. Keep going for the Bonito. And you'll see Mrs. McSween in the morning. Good luck."

As if unhearing, McSween drew himself to the full of

his imposing height and, with his glazed eyes, swept the broken, flaming walls of what had been his home.

"My home, my wife!" he muttered. "God of my fathers, hast Thou forsaken me?"

Before him was the open door. He strode toward it. For an instant he paused upon the threshold, his Bible clutched to his breast as he gazed upon his ruined dooryard and the three corpses sprawled about it. Quietly, head up, he walked out into the red glare of the flames.

"Here I am," he called in a hollow voice. "I am McSween."

A streak of fire leaped from the blackness beyond the adobe wall. A dozen rifles blazed almost simultaneously. Tiny puffs of dust leaped out from McSween's coat. He half-turned, stumbled forward, and fell dead upon his Bible, true to his faith to the last, his hands innocent of man's blood.

"I got him," shouted Bob Beckwith, waving his smoking rifle high above his head. "I got McSween."

A demoniac chorus of yells went up to the sky. The men behind the adobe wall went wild with boisterous joy. They fired a half-dozen wanton shots at McSween's body. Several bullets thudded into the corpse, causing it to jerk as with a spasm. Others splattered earth over the dead face. Then there was silence. The ambushed watchers waited for fresh victims.

Out of the door, one after the other, plunged Tom O'Folliard, Jim French, Doc Skurlock, José Chavez y Chavez, Ignacio Gonzalez, and Ygenio Salazar. Salazar was cut down, dangerously wounded; he lay limp and motionless, feigning death. Gonzalez's arm was shattered by a bullet, but he continued his flight. As by a miracle, all but Salazar ran the gauntlet of bullets, tumbled over

the back wall, and escaped. They were joined in their stampede for the hills by Charlie Bowdre, George Coe, and Hendry Brown, who ran from the McSween store at the same time.

The Kid was the last to leave. He hitched his belt a little tighter, pulled his hat down more firmly on his head. He looked with sharp scrutiny at his two six-shooters, one in either hand. He cocked them. He shot a glance through the open door into the ruddy splendour. His quick eye calculated the positions of the five men lying motionless, all dead except Salazar, shamming death. He determined his course among them; he must be careful not to trip over a corpse. Between him and the back wall of the yard was a space of thirty feet. Across it, death would be snapping at his heels at every step. But if he had to die, he would die fighting.

There was ominous silence off at the side along the adobe wall. His lurking, unseen foes were waiting for him, their rifles ready, their fingers on the trigger. All about him was the devouring sibilance of the fire. Flames were bursting through the walls and ceiling of the room, darting, twisting, crawling like brilliant serpents greedily alive. He braced himself for the start. Half the roof crashed in behind him. Smoke and a myriad fiery sparks leaped after him as he darted out the door, his guns blazing.

A yell of triumph went up from his enemies. This was the man they wanted. "Here comes the Kid!" They rose behind the wall. They threw their rifles to a level on the flying figure. "Get him, boys!" "Kill him!" A salvo of twenty guns welcomed him into that crimson square of death.

The Kid's trigger fingers worked with machine-gun ra-

pidity. Fire poured from the muzzles of his forty-fours in continuous streaks. Bob Beckwith, slayer of McSween, fell dead across the wall, his rifle clattering on the ground, head and arms dangling downward limply. John McKinney of Las Cruces was struck in the mouth, the bullet carrying away half the gallantly up-turned moustache of the handsome youth. Another ball cut a deep notch in Old Man Pearce's ear, whispering the nearness of death. One man killed, two branded for life—this was the Kid's score as he hurtled toward the sheltering darkness, never for an instant hesitating, never slackening his pellmell speed.

Pumping their Winchesters, churning shots from their double-action revolvers, his foes fired more than fifty shots at him as he rushed across the space of thirty feet. Bullets sang about his ears, ripped shreds from his blue flannel shirt, bored holes through his white steeple sombrero, enveloped him in an invisible frame of hissing lead. Every bullet was aimed at his heart and every one was winged with deadly hatred. But not a bullet touched his body. On he ran like a darting, elusive shadow as if under mystic protection. He cleared the back wall at a leap. He bounded out of the flare of the conflagration. Darkness swallowed him at a gulp. Splashing across the Bonito, he gained the safety of the hills.

The firing ceased. Five men had been killed within five minutes and lay within a space of five square feet in the McSween backyard. The Murphy men swarmed in. Old Andy Boyle, thinking he detected signs of life in Salazar, kicked him in the ribs, caught him by the cartridge-belt and shook him up and down against the ground, pressed the muzzle of a rifle at last against his heart.

"No use wasting good lead on that greaser," said John Kinney as Boyle was about to press the trigger; "he's dead."

So Boyle did not fire.

Jimmy Dolan touched with the tip of his boot a dead man lying near the kitchen door. He turned him over.

"Here's McSween!" he shouted.

The others crowded round. They laughed, they hurrahed, they shook hands. Old Man Pearce produced a whisky flask.

"Have one on me, boys," he yelled.

The bottle went round and everybody took a swig.

"What's this?" Dolan poked with his rifle at something lying beside the corpse. He stooped over and looked more closely.

"The Bible!"

There was a roar of laughter.

"Where's his gun?"

"Don't appear to have none. Died with his Bible in his hand."

"Now ain't that a hell of a note?"

"His Bible in his hand!"

Again they roared with laughter.

So died McSween, enigma and paradox of the Lincoln County war; a man of the Christ-complex owning the allegiance of murderers and desperadoes; an apostle of peace and the leader of a fighting faction in a deadly feud; intellectual, yet a child in his understanding of men and life; filled with human kindness, yet innocently fomenting war and drawing upon himself the bitterness of lethal hatreds; a futile shadow among relentless realities; a pathetic marionette caught in a whirlwind and swept to destruction; a Sir Galahad of the vendetta, moving with

serene, unclouded soul toward inevitable tragedy and finding at last the peace of the Holy Grail in death.

It was a famous victory, worthy of festal celebration. George Washington and Sebron Bates, ancient Negroes, who from time out of memory had made music at the fandangos of the town and countryside, were fetched from their homes. Perched like black imps on the adobe wall with violin and guitar, the old darkies struck up merry tunes while the victors danced, drinking whisky and roaring out songs. All Lincoln crowded around to watch the bacchanalian carousal. The backyard with its sprawling dead men lay red in the glare of the flames; the blackness of the night shut it in like the walls of a cave. "Swing your partners!" The tipsy revellers caught each other about the waist and whooped and yelled in a furious, farcical quadrille. "Ladies to the centre!" In and out among the corpses they careened and reeled. "Hands all round!" They cavorted in burlesque pigeon-wings with boisterous buffoonery and horse play, their uncouth antics silhouetted in weird, tremendous shadows that flickered over the ghastly field of death and plunged off into the darkness. It was a primordial orgy of blood-crazed savages commemorating a warpath triumph with a scalp dance.

It was long past midnight when the devil's saturnalia ended and the drunken rioters dispersed to their homes, filling the night with oaths and ribaldry. The fire died out; only wisps of wan smoke curled among the blackened ruins. Among the corpses, a form, that throughout the death-masque had lain stretched motionless upon the ground, stirred as if in resurrection, rose upon hands and knees, began to crawl with stealthy movement toward

the rear wall. It was Salazar. Upon the murderous crew he had palmed off a heroic subterfuge that had saved his life. Shot through, sorely wounded, he managed to scramble over the wall. In the darkness, he staggered away to safety.

AMERICA

An Essay of Travel and Observation

BY *Aldous Huxley*

FROM "JESTING PILATE"

THE young Voltaire of English letters views America with a delicate wit, keen and amusing intelligence which make this essay an intellectual holiday.

SAN FRANCISCO

REPORTERS were lying in wait on the quay to ask me what I thought about the General Strike. I told them that I had been at sea for the last month and was therefore entirely ignorant of current English affairs. That made no difference, they assured me; they wanted my opinion all the same. I gave them my prejudices, which are Fabian and mildly labourite. They thanked me, took some photographs and departed. The photographs appeared in the evening papers. They bore a certain resemblance to the original. The camera cannot lie. Or, to be more accurate, it can lie; but the process of making it lie is tedious and expensive. The photographers had no sufficient inducement to improve my appearance. But the speech which accompanied the pictures and which was attributed to me, was beautifully unrecognisable. Such a paean in praise of capitalism and Mr. Baldwin! It did one's heart good to read it. Labourism and Fabian prejudices are not popular in America. The reporters had made me respectable. It was meant, no doubt, as an act of kindness. Still I should have preferred it if they had emended my face rather than my opinions.

ON THE TRAIN

THE Daylight Limited takes just twelve hours to run from San Francisco to Los Angeles. And through what various landscapes!

First the English home counties—a land like a park, checkered with small ploughed fields and swelling into little hills. The little hills became rolling downs, the downs grew larger and larger, until they were great mountains with mile-high slopes of grass and here and there a wood of dark evergreen trees. The mountains subsided, the land became dryer and more barren, the grass disappeared. For an hour or two we were in a desert —miles upon miles of dust, fledged sparsely with the grey-leaved growth of a parched land. We might have been in Rajputana. But there, suddenly, on the right, was the Pacific, for ever breaking and breaking on its desolate beaches.

"One hundred and thirteen miles along the shores of the Ocean," a gentleman in uniform obligingly informed us, and then tried to sell us tinted spectacles that we might contemplate the Ocean without discomfort. "Sci-en-tifically made to exclude the ultra-violet rays. The price is one dollar only." All day, at intervals of half an hour, he walked up and down the train, telling us about the beauties and the wealth of California and peddling, now postcards, now candies, now Californian figs and oranges, now chewing-gum and True Story Magazines. He was the only distrac-

tion on the train. In a desperation of *désœuvrement* the passengers bought whatever he offered.

"One hundred and thirteen miles along the shores of the Ocean." Before we had passed the hundred and thirteenth milestone, the country had changed again—had changed from the sea coast of Rajputana to that of Italy. The deserts began to flourish. Groves of lemons and oranges flanked the railway. There were vineyards, and fields of corn, and bright flowers. Parallel with the sea, a range of elegant and florid mountains mimicked the Apuan Alps. A little architecture, and the illusion would have been complete. But there were no churches, no huge pink villas among the cypresses, no castles on the hills. Nothing but wooden shanties and little brick dog kennels, dust heaps and oil-tanks and telegraph poles, and the innumerable motor-cars of the most prosperous country in the world.

LOS ANGELES. A RHAPSODY

First Movement

DAYLIGHT had come to the common folk of Hollywood, the bright Californian daylight. But within the movie studio there shone no sun, only the lamps, whose intense and greenish yellow radiance gives to living men and women the appearance of jaundiced corpses. In a corner of one huge barn-like structure they were preparing to

"shoot." The camera stood ready, the corpse-lights were in full glare. Two or three cowboys and a couple of clowns lounged about, smoking. A man in evening dress was trusting to his moustache to make him look like an English villain. A young lady, so elegant, so perfectly and flawlessly good-looking that you knew her at once for the Star, was sitting in a corner, reading a book. The Director—it seemed a waste that such a profile should be *au-dessus de la mêlée* instead of in the pictures—gave her a courteous hail. Miss X looked up from her literature. "It's the scene where you see the murder being committed," he explained. Miss X got up, put away the book and beckoned to her maid, who brought her a comb and a mirror. "My nose all right?" she asked, dabbing on powder. "Music!" shouted the Director. "Make it emotional." The band, whose duty it is in every studio to play the actors into an appropriate state of soul, struck up a waltz. The studio was filled with a sea of melodic treacle; our spirits rocked and wallowed on its sticky undulations. Miss X handed back her powder puff to the maid and walked up to the camera. "You hide behind that curtain and look out," the Director explained. Miss X retired behind the curtain. "Just the hand first of all," the Director went on. "Clutching. Then the face, gradually." "Yes, Mr. Z," came the quiet voice of the Star from behind the hanging plush. "Ready?" asked the Director. "Then go ahead." The camera began to

purr, like a genteel variety of dentist's drill. The curtain slightly heaved. A white hand clutched at its edge. "Terror, Miss X," called the Director. The white hand tightened its clutch in a spasm of cinematographic fear. The Director nodded to the bandmaster. "Put some pep into it," he adjured. Pep was put in; the billows of treacle rose higher. "Now the face, Miss X. Slowly. Just one eye. That's good. Hold it. A little more terror." Miss X heart-rendingly registered her alarm. "That's good. That's very good. O.K." The camera stopped purring. Miss X came out from behind the curtain and walked back to her chair. Reopening her book, she went on quietly reading about Theosophy.

We moved on and, after halting for a few moments on our way to watch some more terror being registered (by a man this time and under a different Director), penetrated into the secret places of the studio. We pronounced passwords, quoted the Manager's permission, disclaimed connections with rival companies and were finally admitted. In one room they were concocting miracles and natural cataclysms—typhoons in bathtubs and miniature earthquakes, the Deluge, the Dividing of the Red Sea, the Great War in terms of toy tanks and Chinese fire crackers, ghosts and the Next World. In another they were modelling prehistoric animals and the architecture of the remote future. In cellars below ground, mysteriously lighted by red lamps and smelling of chemicals, a series of

machines was engaged in developing and printing the films. Their output was enormous. I forget how many thousands of feet of art and culture they could turn out each day. Quite a number of miles, in any case.

Second Movement

Emerging, I bought a newspaper. It was Saturday's; a whole page was filled with the announcements of rival religious sects, advertising the spiritual wares that they would give away, or sell on the Sabbath. "Dr. Leon Tucker with the Musical Messengers in a Great Bible Conference. 3 Meetings To-morrow. Organ Chimes, Giant Marimbaphone, Vibraphone, Violin, Piano, Accordeon, Banjo, Guitar and other Instruments. Wilshire Baptist Church." The Giant Marimbaphone was certainly tempting. But in the First Methodist Church (Figueroa at Twentieth) they were going to distribute "Mother's Day Flowers to all Worshippers." (On Mother's Day you must wear a red carnation if your mother is alive, a white one if she is dead. The florists are everywhere the most ardent of matriolaters.) Moreover they had booked the exclusive services of Dr. James H. Maclaren, Dramatic Orator, who was going to give his well-known stunt, "Impersonations of Lincoln and Roosevelt." "Dr. Maclaren," we were informed, "comes with a unique, original, eloquent, instructive and inspiring Message con-

cerning two of our Great Presidents. Uplifting and inspiring. It will do your soul good. The wonderful Messages of these two Great Presidents will be brought home with new emphasis and you will feel that you have spent the evening in the company of great Spirits. Hear the great organ, Quartet of Artists and Vested Chorus." At the Hollywood Congregational Church there were to be moving pictures of Jackie Coogan in his crusade to the Near East; the prospect was a draw. But then so was the photograph of Miss Leila Castberg of the Church of Divine Power (Advanced Thought); her performance might not be very interesting—she was scheduled to preach at the Morosco Theatre on Divine Motherhood—but the face which looked out from her advertisement was decidedly pleasing. Less attractive, to the devout male at any rate, were the photos of Messrs. Clarke and Van Bruch; but the phrasing of their ad. was enough to counteract in the mind of the reader the effect produced by their portraits. "IT'S ON, FOLKS, IT'S ON," so the announcement ran. "The tide is rising at an OLD-FASHIONED REVIVAL. Every night except Monday, 7.30 P.M. Soul-stirring sermons and songs. Special to-night! Hear 10 Evangelists—10. Van Bruch-Clarke Evangelistic Party."

Jazz it up, jazz it up. Keep moving. Step on the gas. Say it with dancing. The Charleston, the Baptists. Radios and Revivals. Uplift and Gilda Gray. The pipe organ, the nigger with the

saxophone, the Giant Marimbaphone. Hymns and the movies and Irving Berlin. Petting Parties and the First Free United Episcopal Methodist Church. Jazz it up! "N. C. Beskin, the CONVERTED JEW, back from a successful tour, will conduct a tabernacle campaign in Glendale. "WHY I BECAME A CHRISTIAN?" Dressed in Jewish garb. Will exhibit interesting paraphernalia." Positively the last appearance. The celebrated Farmyard Imitations. 10 Evangelists—10. The finest troupe of Serio-Comic Cyclists ever. Onward Christian Soldiers. Abide with me. I'm gonna bring a watermelon to my girl to-night.

THIRD MOVEMENT

Mother's Day. (Mr. Herring of Indiana, "The Father of Mother's Day.") But why not Flapper's Day? It would be more representative, more democratic, so to speak. For in Joy City there are many more Flappers—married as well as unmarried—than Mothers.

> Nunc vitiat uterum quae vult formosa videri,
> Raraque in hoc aevo est quae velit esse parens.

Thousands and thousands of flappers, and almost all incredibly pretty. Plumply ravishing, they give, as T. S. Eliot has phrased it, a "promise of pneumatic bliss." Of pneumatic bliss, but of not much else, to judge by their faces. So curiously uniform, unindividual and blank. Hardly more

expressive—to the foreign eye, at any rate—than any of the other parts of that well-contoured anatomy which they are at such pains to display.

On the beaches of the Pacific that display was indeed superb. Mack Sennett Bathing Beauties by the hundred. They gambolled all around us, as we walked up and down in the windy sunlight along the sands. Frisking temptations. But we were three St. Anthonies—Charlie Chaplin and Robert Nichols and I—three grave theologians of art, too deeply absorbed in discussing the way of cinematographic salvation to be able to bestow more than the most casual attention on the Sirens, however plumply deserving.

Fourth Movement

Cocktail time. (We've dealt with the same bootlegger for upwards of two years now. A most reliable man.). Ice rattles in the shaker—a dance of miniature skeletons—and the genuinely reliable liquor is poured out. *À boire, à boire!* Long live Pantagruel! This is dry America. We climbed into our host's car and drove, it seemed interminably, through the immense and sprawling city. Past movie palaces and theatres and dance halls. Past shining shops and apartments and enormous hotels. On every building the vertical lines of light went up like rockets into the dark sky. And the buildings themselves—they too had almost rocketed into existence. Thirty years ago

Los Angeles was a one-horse—a half-horse—town. In 1940 or thereabouts it is scheduled to be as big as Paris. As big and as gay. The great Joy City of the West.

And what joy! The joy of rushing about, of always being busy, of having no time to think, of being too rich to doubt. The joy of shouting and bantering, of dancing and for ever dancing to the noise of a savage music, of lustily singing.

(Yes, sir, she's my Baby.
No, sir, don't say "Maybe."
Yes, sir, she's my Baby now.)

The joy of loudly laughing and talking at the top of the voice about nothing. (For thought is barred in this City of Dreadful Joy and conversation is unknown.) The joy of drinking prohibited whisky from enormous silver flasks, the joy of cuddling provocatively bold and pretty flappers, the joy of painting the cheeks, of rolling the eye and showing off the desirable calves and figure. The joy of going to the movies and the theatre, of sitting with one's fellows in luxurious and unexclusive clubs, of trooping out on summer evenings with fifty thousand others to listen to concerts in the open air, of being always in a crowd, never alone. The joy of going on Sundays to hear a peppy sermon, of melting at the hymns, of repenting one's sins, of getting a kick out of uplift. The joy in a word, of having what is technically known as a Good Time.

And oh, how strenuously, how whole-heartedly the people of Joy City devote themselves to having a Good Time! The Good Times of Rome and Babylon, of Byzantium and Alexandria were dull and dim and miserably restricted in comparison with the superlatively Good Time of modern California. The ancient world was relatively poor; and it had known catastrophe. The wealth of Joy City is unprecedentedly enormous. Its light-hearted people are unaware of War or pestilence or famine or revolution, have never in their safe and still half empty Eldorado known anything but prosperous peace, contentment, universal acceptance. The truest patriots, it may be, are those who pray for a national calamity.

On and on we drove, through the swarming streets of Joy City. (One automobile, sir, to every three and a quarter inhabitants.) The tall buildings impended, the lights whizzed up like rockets. On and on. Across an open space there suddenly loomed up a large white building, magically shining against the intensified blackness of the sky behind. (Just finished, sir, The Temple of the Elks.) From its summit the beams of half a dozen searchlights waved to heaven. They seemed the antennae of some vast animal, feeling and probing in the void—for what? For Truth, perhaps? Truth is not wanted in the City of Dreadful Joy. For Happiness? It is possessed. For God? But God had already been found; he was inside the shining Temple; he *was* the temple, the brand

new, million-dollar Temple, in which at this moment the initiates of the venerable Order of Elks were congregated to worship, not the effetely aristocratic Lady Poverty, but plain American Mrs. Wealth. Five or six hundred motor-cars stood parked outside the doors. What *could* those luminous antennae be probing for? Why, for nothing, of course, for nothing! If they waved so insistently, that was just for fun. Waving for waving's sake. Movement is a joy and this is the great Joy City of the West.

Fifth Movement

The restaurant is immense. The waiters sprint about, carrying huge dishes of the richest food. What Gargantuan profusion! Great ten pound chops, square feet of steak, fillets of whale, whole turkeys stewed in cream, mountains of butter. And the barbarous music throbs and caterwauls unceasingly. Between each juicy and satiating course, the flappers and the young men dance, clasped in an amorous wrestle. How Rabelais would have adored it! For a week, at any rate. After that, I am afraid, he would have begun to miss the conversation and the learning, which serve in his Abbey of Thelema as the accompaniment and justification of pleasure. This Western pleasure, meaty and raw, untempered by any mental sauce—would even Rabelais's unsqueamish stomach have been strong enough to digest it? I

doubt it. In the City of Dreadful Joy Pantagruel would soon have died of fatigue and boredom. *Taedium laudamus*—so reads (at any rate for the inhabitants of Rabelais's continent) the triumphant canticle of Californian joy.

The restaurant is suddenly plunged into darkness. A great beam of light, like the Eye of God in an old engraving, stares down from somewhere near the ceiling, right across the room, squinting this way and that, searching—and at last finding what it had been looking for; a radiant figure in white, the singer of the evening. A good, though not superlatively good singer in the style of Ethel Levey or Jenny Golder.

> You gotta feed a chicken corn,
> You gotta feed a seal fish,
> You gotta feed a man (significant pause and *oeillade*) Love.

And so on. The enthusiasm which greets these rhymed lectures in elementary physiology is inordinate. Being enthusiastic is a joy. We are in Joy's metropolis.

There is a final burst of applause. The divine eyelid closes down over God's shining eye. The band strikes up again. The dancing re-begins. The Charleston, the fox-trot. "There is only one first-class civilisation in the world to-day. It is right here, in the United States and the Dominion of Canada." Monkeyville, Bryan, the Ku Klux Klan. "Europe's is hardly second-class, and Asia's

is fourth to sixth class." Jazz it up; jazz it up! And what did late, great Ambassador Page have to say? "The whole continent (of Europe) is rotten, or tyrannical, or yellow dog. I wouldn't give Long Island or Moore County for the whole continent of Europe." And with Coney Island added to Long Island and Los Angeles in the scale along with Moore County, he might have thrown in all Asia and the British Empire. Three cheers for Page! Yes, sir, "American idealism has made itself felt as a great contributory force to the advancement of mankind." Three cheers for George F. Babbitt and the Rotary Club! And three cheers for Professor Nixon Carver! "Prosperity," the Professor has said, "is coming to us precisely because our ideas are not materialistic. All these things (*e.g.,* the Elks' Temple, the jazz bands, the movie palaces, the muffins at breakfast) are added to us precisely because we are seeking the Kingdom of God and His righteousness." Three cheers more—thrice three! The Prof. deserves them.

It is almost midnight. A few minutes and it will be the Sabbath. A few hours and the Giant Marimbaphone will be proclaiming the glory of the new billion dollar God. At the Ambassador Hotel (alas, too expensive for me to stay at) Dr. Ernest Holmes will be preaching on "The Science of Jesus." It is time to go home. Farewell, farewell. Parting is such sweet sorrow. Did Tosti raise his bowler hat when he said "Good-bye"?

CHICAGO

TURNING over the pages of the Chicago telephone directory, I came upon a full-page advertisement of a firm of undertakers, or "morticians," as they are now more elegantly styled in America. The type was large and bold; my eye was fatally caught. I interrupted my search to read, in twenty lines of lyrical prose, an appreciation of the incomparable Service which Kalbsfleisch and Company were rendering to Society. Their shop, I learned, was a mortuary chapel in the Gothic style; their caskets (the grosser English would call them coffins) were elegant, silk-lined and cheap; their motor-hearses were funereally sumptuous; their manners towards the bereaved were grave, yet cheering, yet purposefully uplifting; and they were fortunate in being able to "lay the Loved Ones to rest in—graveyard, the Cemetery Unusual." Service was their motto and always would be. Service whole-hearted and unflagging. And to prove that they meant it, personally and individually, they had reproduced two photographs, one of Mr. Kalbsfleisch, the Governing Director of the Firm, and the other of charming Mrs. Kalbsfleisch, Licensed Embalmer.

I remained for some time in meditative contemplation of Mrs. Kalbsfleisch's smile; I re-read more than once her husband's poetical and uplifting prose. The page on which I now gazed was something more, I reflected, than a mere page of

advertising in a telephone book. It was a page out of contemporary American history. Something is happening on the Western shore of the Atlantic, something that has already made America unlike any other country in the world, something that threatens to separate it still further from the older civilisations, unless (which God forbid) the older civilisations should themselves fall victims to the same distorting process. To any one who reads and inwardly digests Mr. Kalbsfleisch's advertisement in the Chicago telephone book, the nature of this strange historical process becomes clear. The page is a symptom and a revealing symbol.

The thing which is happening in America is a revaluation of values, a radical alteration (for the worse) of established standards. Mr. Kalbsfleisch shows us how far the process has already gone. How much farther it may go we cannot guess, nor to what consummation it will lead, nor whether there may be reactions and counter-processes.

There are two ways in which the existing standards of value may be altered. In the first case, the very existence of values may be denied. In the second, values are admitted, but the mode in which they are assigned is changed: things which in the past had been regarded as possessing great value are disparaged or, more often, things which were previously considered of small value come to be regarded as precious.

In Europe such attempts as have been made to alter the existing standard of values have generally

taken the form of denials of the existence of values Our belief that things possess value is due to an immediate sense or intuition; we feel, and feeling we know, that things have value. If men have doubted the real existence of values, that is because they have not trusted their own immediate and intuitive conviction. They have required an intellectual, a logical and "scientific" proof of their existence. Now such a proof is not easily found at the best of times. But when you start your argumentation from the premises laid down by scientific materialism, it simply cannot be discovered. Indeed, any argument starting from these premises must infallibly end in a denial of the real existence of values. Fortunately human beings are capable of enormous inconsistencies, and the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century men of science, whose conception of the universe was such that values could not be regarded by them as possessing any sort of real existence, were in practice the most ardent upholders of the established standards of values.

Still the materialist conception of the universe could not fail to exert an influence. The generation of Arnold and of Tennyson sat uncomfortably on the horns of what seemed an unescapable dilemma. Either the materialist hypothesis was true; in which case there was no such thing as value. Or else it was false; in which case values really existed, but science could not. But science manifestly *did* exist. The electric telegraph and

the steam engine were there to prove it. The fact that you could go into any post office and communicate almost instantaneously with the antipodes was felt to be a confirmation of the materialistic hypothesis then current among men of science. It worked, therefore it was true, and therefore our intimate sense of the existence of values was a mere illusion. Tennyson and Arnold did not want it to be an illusion; they were distressed, they were inwardly divided. Their intellects denied what their feelings asserted; and the Truth (or rather what was at that time apparently the Truth) was at war with their hopes, their intuitive convictions, their desires. The European intellectuals of a later generation accepted the conclusions logically derivable from the scientific-materialist hypothesis and resigned themselves—almost with glee—to living in a devaluated world. Some of them are still with us, and the theories which they propounded, as corollaries to the main value-denying theory from which they started, are still influential. Claiming to speak as the apostles of scientific truth, they stripped art of its significance, they reinterpreted human life in terms, not of its highest, spiritual aspects, but of its lowest. (I am using the terms "highest" and "lowest," which they, of course, would repudiate as nonsensical.) A less sophisticated generation had regarded the Sistine frescoes as being somehow superior to a prettily patterned rug, *Macbeth* as more important than *The Rape of the Lock*. Illusion! According to

the apostles of scientific truth, one was really just as good as the other. Indeed, the *Rape* and the patterned rug were actually superior to *Macbeth* and the Michelangelo frescoes, as being more finished and perfect works of art: they aroused, it was explained, intenser "aesthetic emotions." Art thus satisfactorily disposed of, religion was next "explained" in terms of sex. The moral conscience was abolished (another illusion) and "amuse yourself" proclaimed as the sole categorical imperative. The theories of Freud were received in intellectual circles with acclaim; to explain every higher activity of the human mind in terms of incest and coprophily came to be regarded not only as truly scientific, but also as somehow virile and courageous. Freudism became the *realpolitik* of psychology and philosophy. Those who denied values felt themselves to be rather heroic; instinctively they were appealing to the standards which they were trying, intellectually, to destroy.

Meanwhile the men of science are finding that the crude materialism of their predecessors is a hypothesis that will not work. Our apostles of scientific truth find themselves the apostles of what will soon be universally regarded as a fallacy.

But the influence of these *ci-devant* "scientific" deniers of value has not been wide. In most human beings the intuitive sense of values is too strong to be seriously affected by intellectual arguments, however specious. They are revolted by the denial of values; they insist on interpreting the world in

terms of high and low. Unfortunately, however, they are apt to make mistakes and to call things by the wrong names, labelling "high" what should rightly be low, and "low" what ought to be high. This falsification of the standard of values is a product, in our modern world, of democracy, and has gone farthest in America. It is much more dangerous than the mere denial of values, because it is much more popular. To most men and women the denial of values is horrible; but the falsification of them so as to square with democratic prejudices is pleasant and flattering. Let us examine Mr. Kalbsfleisch's advertisement and try to discover the direction in which standards have been perverted and the methods of falsification employed.

The democratic hypothesis in its extreme and most popular form is that all men are equal and that I am just as good as you are. It is so manifestly untrue that a most elaborate system of humbug has had to be invented in order to render it credible to any normally sane human being. Nowhere has this system of humbug been brought to such perfection as in America. Take the case of Mr. Kalbsfleisch. He is an undertaker. The trade he practises has never enjoyed great esteem; for, although it is a necessary trade, it cannot be said to call for high intellectual or moral qualities in its practitioners. Mr. Kalbsfleisch and his fellows have realised and resented this failure on the part of humanity to esteem them. Being good democrats, they want to insist on their equality with the

admittedly best people. They begin by altering the name of their trade. The word "undertaker" has base associations. They therefore coin a new locution and style themselves "morticians." "Mortician" is a word that rhymes with such highly reputable words as physician, mathematician, academician, politician—not to mention Titian. What's in a name? Much. From having been undertakers and mere tradesmen, the morticians have become artists and members of an almost learned profession.

Having emended their name, the morticians proceed to exalt and magnify their calling. They do this in a very simple, but eminently effective way: by insisting on the Service which they render to Humanity.

The notion of Service is fundamental to Christianity. Jesus and his greatest followers have proclaimed the spiritual importance of Service and have exhorted all men and women to be the servants of their fellows. The morticians, and with them all the Business Men of America, are as whole-heartedly enthusiastic about Service as was ever St. Francis or his divine Master. But the activities which they designate by the word "Service" happen to be slightly different from those which the Founder of Christianity called by the same name. For Jesus and St. Francis, Service connoted self-sacrifice, abnegation, humility. For the morticians and other American Business Men, Service means something else; it means doing

profitable business efficiently and with just sufficient honesty to keep out of jail. American Business Men talk like St. Francis; but their activities are indistinguishable from those of the money-changers and the sellers of doves whom Jesus expelled from the Temple with a whip of small cords.

The money-changers and the bird-hawkers protested, no doubt, that they were serving humanity as well as, and even better than, their aggressor. "What we do," they must have argued, "is useful and necessary; society finds us indispensable." It is on the same ground—that they perform necessary jobs well—that American Business Men claim to be doing Service, and Service of the highest value. They overlook the significant historical fact that all the valuable things in life, all the things that make for civilisation and progress, are precisely the unnecessary ones. All scientific research, all art, all religion are (by comparison with making coffins or breakfast foods) unnecessary. But if we had stuck to the merely necessary, we should still be apes. According to any proper standard of values, the unnecessary things and the unnecessary people who are concerned with them are much more important than the necessary ones. By exalting the merely necessary to an equality with the unnecessary, the American Business Man has falsified the standard of values. The service rendered by a mortician or a realtor has come to be regarded

as the equivalent of the service rendered by an artist of a man of science. Babbitt can now honestly believe that he and his kind are doing as much for humanity as the Pasteurs and the Isaac Newtons. Kalbsfleisch among his silk-lined caskets knows himself to be as good as Beethoven. Successful stockbrokers, certain that Business is Religion, can come home after a day of speculation on the Exchange, feeling as virtuously happy as Buddha must have felt when he had renounced the world and received his great illumination.

In every part of the world and at all times the vast majority of human beings has consisted of Babbitts and peasants. They are indispensable; the necessary work must be done. But never, except at the present time, and nowhere but in America, have the necessary millions believed themselves the equals of the unnecessary few. In Europe the ancient standards still persist, the ghost at least of the old hierarchy survives. The rich parvenu may despise the man of science for his poverty; but he still feels humble before his knowledge, his superior intelligence and his disinterestedness. That technique of humbug, by the employment of which successful stockbroking may be made to seem as valuable and noble an occupation as scientific research or artistic creation, has not yet been perfected in Europe, it has hardly been invented. True, there are many people who would like to see the technique introduced, ready-made and perfected, from across the Atlantic. I trust, and I am

even moderately confident, that they will be for ever disappointed.

Meanwhile, on the Western side of the Atlantic the progressive falsification of values steadily continues. So far, what has happened is this: preciousness has been attributed to things and people previously regarded as possessing small value. But in certain parts of the Union the innumerable necessary men are preparing to move a step farther. Not content with attributing the highest possible value to themselves, they are denying it to the unnecessary few; the majority has sovereign rights. What was previously held to be high is now being disparaged. The mental and moral qualities, the occupations and diversions of the greatest number are regarded as the best, the sole permissible; the qualities and occupations of the few are condemned. Stupidity, suggestibility and business are held up as supremely precious. Intelligence, independence and disinterested activity—once admired—are in process of becoming evil things which ought to be destroyed. In Tennessee and other remote provinces the crusade against them has already begun. It remains to be seen whether this further perversion of values will affect the rest of the continent.

NEW YORK

NOW that liberty is out of date, equality an exploded notion and fraternity a proven impossibility, republics should change their mottoes. In-

telligence, Sterility, Insolvency: that would do for contemporary France. But not for America. The American slogan would have to be something quite different. The national motto should fit the national facts. What I should write under America's flapping eagle would be: Vitality, Prosperity, Modernity.

Let us begin with the last, modernity. Modernity in this context may be defined as the freedom (at any rate in the sphere of practical, material life) from customary bonds and ancient prejudices, from traditional and vested interest; the freedom, in a word, from history. Change is accepted in America as the first and fundamental fact—and accepted, not as other peoples have accepted it, as an evil to be combated by the organisation of a stable society, by the making of things too strong and solid for time to be able quickly to devour, but as a good, as the foundation and key of practical life. Most things in this modern land are provisional, made to last only till something better, or at any rate something newer, shall appear to take their place. All through the country the houses have an air of impermanence; the landscape, wherever the hand of man has touched it, looks sketchy and unfinished. The factories are perpetually renewing themselves; half their profits are earmarked for the expenses of this chronic rejuvenation. Forty-year old locomotives, having the strange and almost fabulous aspect of Tertiary monsters, still rumble over European rails. A respectable American railway company would think

itself disgraced by the possession of an engine that was more than ten years of age. Nor would the engines survive much longer; things, here, are built to be scrapped as soon as they have outworn their first youth. Change is made much of, it is rejoiced in. That is modernity.

And then there is prosperity. America is a half-populated country teeming with natural wealth. Business methods are unhampered, except perhaps in the East, by the old traditions belonging to a vanished form of society. The traditions of an age of feudalism, of agriculture and of craftsmanship have done much to cramp the efficient and rational development of industrialism in Europe. The greater part of America started with a clean slate. In California there is one motor car to every three inhabitants. Considering the Californian circumstances, it is not to be wondered at.

American vitality is a function, mathematically speaking, of the prosperity and the modernity. An insufficiently nourished human being requires a great deal of rest. Reduced to an Indian diet, Americans would be a good deal less interested than they actually are in business efficiency, uplift and the Charleston. They would spend most of their spare time in doze, or in the doze's first cousin: meditation. But they have enough to eat—a great deal more than enough, in fact. They can afford to hustle; indeed they must hustle or else die of plethora. Men and women who wash down

beefsteaks with glasses of rich creamy milk need to do something pretty strenuous in order to keep alive at all.

The psychological effects of prosperity are hardly less striking than the physical. In less fortunate countries the precariousness of existence keeps large classes of the population in a state of chronic fear. Unemployment is a haunting apprehension, both to manual workers and to those who wear black coats. So little is needed in Europe to precipitate the man of the middle class into the abysses of lower classdom; the bottomless pit of poverty, into which so many of the manual workers have already fallen, gapes before his feet. Fear haunts and for ever darkly impends. Fear is the enemy of life; it inhibits every function of the mind and body. That is why, in the less fortunate parts of Europe, vitality is so low.

In America this fear hardly exists; there is no reason why any one should fail to earn good wages. Nor is the fall from the status of the clerk to that, shall we say, of the factory hand discreditable, as it would be in the older countries, where the prejudice against manual labour as something fundamentally degrading and unrespectable still lingers. The middle classes are therefore largely relieved of their terror of losing caste. Liberated from fear, the Americans live with confidence, and therefore with enhanced vitality. A generous extravagance, undreamed of in other parts of the world, is the

American rule. Men and women earn largely and spend what they have on the national pleasures, which are all social and stimulative of vitality.

Modernity also tends to heighten vitality—or to be more exact, it affects the expression of vitality, externalising it in the form of vehement action. The joyful acceptance of change, which so profoundly influences American industry, business methods and domestic architecture, reacts on the affairs of daily, personal life. Pleasure is associated with a change of place and environment, finally with mere movement for its own sake. People leave their homes if they want entertainment. They externalise their vitality in visiting places of public amusement, in dancing and motoring—in doing anything that is not quietly sitting by their own fireside (or rather by their own radiator). What is known as "night life" flourishes in America as nowhere else in the world. And nowhere, perhaps, is there so little conversation. In America vitality is given its most obviously vital expression. Hence there appears to be even more vitality in the Americans than perhaps there really is. A man may have plenty of vitality and yet keep still; his motionless calm may be mistaken for listlessness. There can be no mistake about people who dance and rush about. American vitality is always obviously manifested. It expresses itself vigorously to the music of the drum and saxophone, to the ringing of telephone bells and the roar of street cars. It expresses itself in terms of hasten-

ing automobiles, of huge and yelling crowds, of speeches, banquets, "drives," slogans, sky signs. It is all movement and noise, like the water gurgling out of a bath—down the waste. Yes, down the waste.

America is popularly supposed to be a country of puritanism. And so it is, as any one who travels across it can discover. But what the traveller also discovers—to his vast surprise, if he happens to have arrived with conventional opinions about the country—is that a Rabelaisian looseness is just as characteristic of contemporary America as puritanical strictness. In Philadelphia the respectable booksellers do not stock Mr. Cabell's *Jurgen.* In Boston the Watch and Ward Society suppresses the *American Mercury,* and in the same city one at least of my own novels has to be sold under the counter as though it were whisky. I have been in Middle Western hotels where it was considered indecent for my wife to smoke a cigarette in the public rooms. And though I have not visited the Southern States, I have read in the newspapers the most extraordinary accounts of the persecutions to which unfaithful wives and errant husbands are liable there. It would be possible to quote many other examples of American puritanism. The list would be long and curious. These few specimens, however, are sufficient to prove the old contention that America is a puritanical country.

But it is also and simultaneously one of the least puritanical countries I have ever visited. In the

theatres of New York it is possible to see plays of a character which can hardly be paralleled in any other city of the world. I do not speak of the displays of naked women; these have now become too commonplace to be remarked on—except, perhaps, in a country colonised by the Pilgrim Fathers. And in any case, Puritans tolerate spectacles and actions much more willingly than they tolerate words. It is only during the last few months that the Lord Chamberlain of England has finally brought himself to license the public performance of Bernard Shaw's play, *Mrs. Warren's Profession.* Countless performances, whose appeal was frankly pornographic, have been licensed during the quarter-century of Mrs. Warren's exile from the stage. Shaw's crime was to have discussed frankly and seriously the subject of prostitution. He broached certain ideas, used certain words. Puritans like to wear the fig leaf over the mouth. This puritanical idiosyncrasy renders all the more remarkable the verbal frankness of many of the plays current in New York during the past months—plays in which there was no exposure of skin, but where spades were openly called spades, and often worse, more intimate names. I remember, for example, a play called *Cradle Snatchers.* It was a Restoration comedy brought up to date—Wycherley without the wit. Indeed, it was a little more than Restoration. Its theme, which concerns three middle-aged ladies, who hire three young men as lovers, is very close to that of a

comedy of Fletcher's, *The Custom of the Country,* which Dryden, when defending the Restoration Theatre against the attacks of Jeremy Collier, pronounced to be far more indecent than any play written in his own day.

Nor was this play an isolated phenomenon. *Sex* lived up to its simple name. *Lulu Belle* and *The Shanghai Gesture* were no less remarkable. The fruitiest passage in *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes,* which was playing when I passed through Chicago, had a robustly Rabelaisian humour, which I for one enormously enjoyed. But what did Mr. Sumner of the New York Vice Society think of those Gargantuan jokes? What about chaste Mr. Chase from Boston? And what would have been the reaction of those two lineal descendants of the Pilgrim Fathers to the casual, light-hearted references to homosexuality which I heard at more than one burlesque show and cabaret? I wonder.

It is not alone in the theatre that this spirit of anti-puritanism exhibits itself; it is also in American life. In one part of the country cigarette smoking will be forbidden, and the self-appointed censors of public morality will hold up passing automobiles and demand to see the marriage certificates of their occupants. In another the relations of the sexes will be easy, intimate and (how shall I phrase it?) chronically amorous. Fresh from the conventionalities and decorum of Paris and London, the stranger coming to the West Coast will be astonished by the amount of casual em-

bracement, squeezing and public kissing which he sees going on, among the most respectable members of society, in restaurants and dancing-places. He will be astonished by the frankness with which people discuss their intimate affairs—in voices, moreover, so loud that the most private details are reverberatingly audible for yards around. He will be impressed by the almost Congolese style of dancing, while that general atmosphere of hilarious inebriation which pervades the night life of all American cities will make him wonder whether a little less Prohibition—which means a little less whisky—might not perhaps be a good thing. In modern America the Rome of Cato and the Rome of Heliogabalus co-exist and flourish with an unprecedented vitality.

LONDON

SO the journey is over and I am back again where I started, richer by much experience and poorer by many exploded convictions, many perished certainties. For convictions and certainties are too often the concomitants of ignorance. Of knowledge and experience the fruit is generally doubt. It is a doubt that grows profounder as knowledge more deeply burrows into the underlying mystery, that spreads in exact proportion as experience is widened and the perceptions of the experiencing individual are refined. A fish's convictions, we may be sure, are unshakeable. A dog is as full of

certainty as the Veteran Liberal who has held the same opinions for forty years. You might implore a cat, as Cromwell by the bowels of Christ once implored a parliament, to bethink it that it might be mistaken; the beast would never doubt but that it was right.

I set out on my travels knowing, or thinking that I knew, how men should live, how be governed, how educated, what they should believe. I knew which was the best form of social organisation and to what end societies had been created. I had my views on every activity of human life. Now, on my return, I find myself without any of these pleasing certainties. Before I started, you could have asked me almost any question about the human species and I should glibly have returned an answer. Ask a profoundly ignorant man how the electric light works; he finds the question absurdly simple. "You just press the button," he explains. The working electrician would give you a rather more technical account of the matter in terms of currents, resistances, conductivity. But the philosophical physicist would modestly confess his ignorance. Electrical phenomena, he would say, can be described and classified. But as for saying what electricity may be . . . And he would throw up his hands. The better you understand the significance of any question, the more difficult it becomes to answer it. Those who like to feel that they are always right and who attach a high importance to their own opinions should stay at home.

When one is travelling, convictions are mislaid as easily as spectacles; but unlike spectacles, they are not easily replaced.

My own losses, as I have said, were numerous. But in compensation for what I lost, I acquired two important new convictions: that it takes all sorts to make a world and that the established spiritual values are fundamentally correct and should be maintained. I call these opinions "new," though both are at least as old as civilisation and though I was fully convinced of their truth before I started. But truths the most ancient, the most habitually believed, may be endowed for us as the result of new experience with an appearance of apocalyptic novelty. There is all the difference in the world between believing academically, with the intellect, and believing personally, intimately, with the whole living self. A deaf man who had read a book about music might be convinced, theoretically, that Mozart was a good composer. But cure his deafness, take him to listen to the G minor Symphony; his conviction of Mozart's greatness would become something altogether new.

Of the fact that it takes all sorts to make a world I have been aware ever since I could read. But proverbs are always platitudes until you have personally experienced the truth of them. The newly arrested thief knows that honesty is the best policy with an intensity of conviction which the rest of us can never experience. And to realise that it takes all sorts to make a world one must have seen a

certain number of the sorts with one's own eyes. Having seen them and having in this way acquired an intimate realisation of the truth of the proverb, one finds it hard to go on complacently believing that one's own opinions, one's own way of life are alone rational and right. This conviction of man's diversity must find its moral expression in the practice of the completest possible tolerance.

But if travel brings a conviction of human diversity, it brings an equally strong conviction of human unity. It inculcates tolerance, but it also shows what are the limits of possible toleration. Religions and moral codes, forms of government and of society are almost endlessly varied, and each has a right to its separate existence. But a oneness underlies this diversity. All men, whatever their beliefs, their habits, their way of life, have a sense of values. And the values are everywhere and in all kinds of society broadly the same. Goodness, beauty, wisdom and knowledge, with the human possessors of these qualities, the human creators of things and thoughts endowed with them, have always and everywhere been honoured.

Our sense of values is intuitive. There is no proving the real existence of values in any way that will satisfy the logical intellect. Our standards can be demolished by argumentation; but we are none the less right to cling to them. Not blindly, of course, not uncritically. Convinced by practical experience of man's diversity, the traveller will not be tempted to cling to his own in-

herited national standard, as though it were necessarily the only true and unperverted one. He will compare standards; he will search for what is common to all; he will observe the ways in which each standard is perverted, he will try to create a standard of his own that shall be as far as possible free from distortion. In one country, he will perceive, the true, fundamental standard is distorted by an excessive emphasising of hierarchic and aristocratic principles; in another by an excess of democracy. Here, too much is made of work and energy for their own sakes; there, too much of mere being. In certain parts of the world he will find spirituality run wild; in others a stupid materialism that would deny the very existence of values. The traveller will observe these various distortions and will create for himself a standard that shall be, as far as possible, free from them—a standard of values that shall be as timeless, as uncontingent on circumstances, as nearly absolute as he can make them. Understanding diversity and allowing for it, he will tolerate, but not without limit. He will distinguish between harmless perversions and those which tend actually to deny or stultify the fundamental values. Towards the first he will be tolerant. There can be no compromise with the second.

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When your turn to Ar portrait o MR. JACK
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Don Ma he we THE P
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